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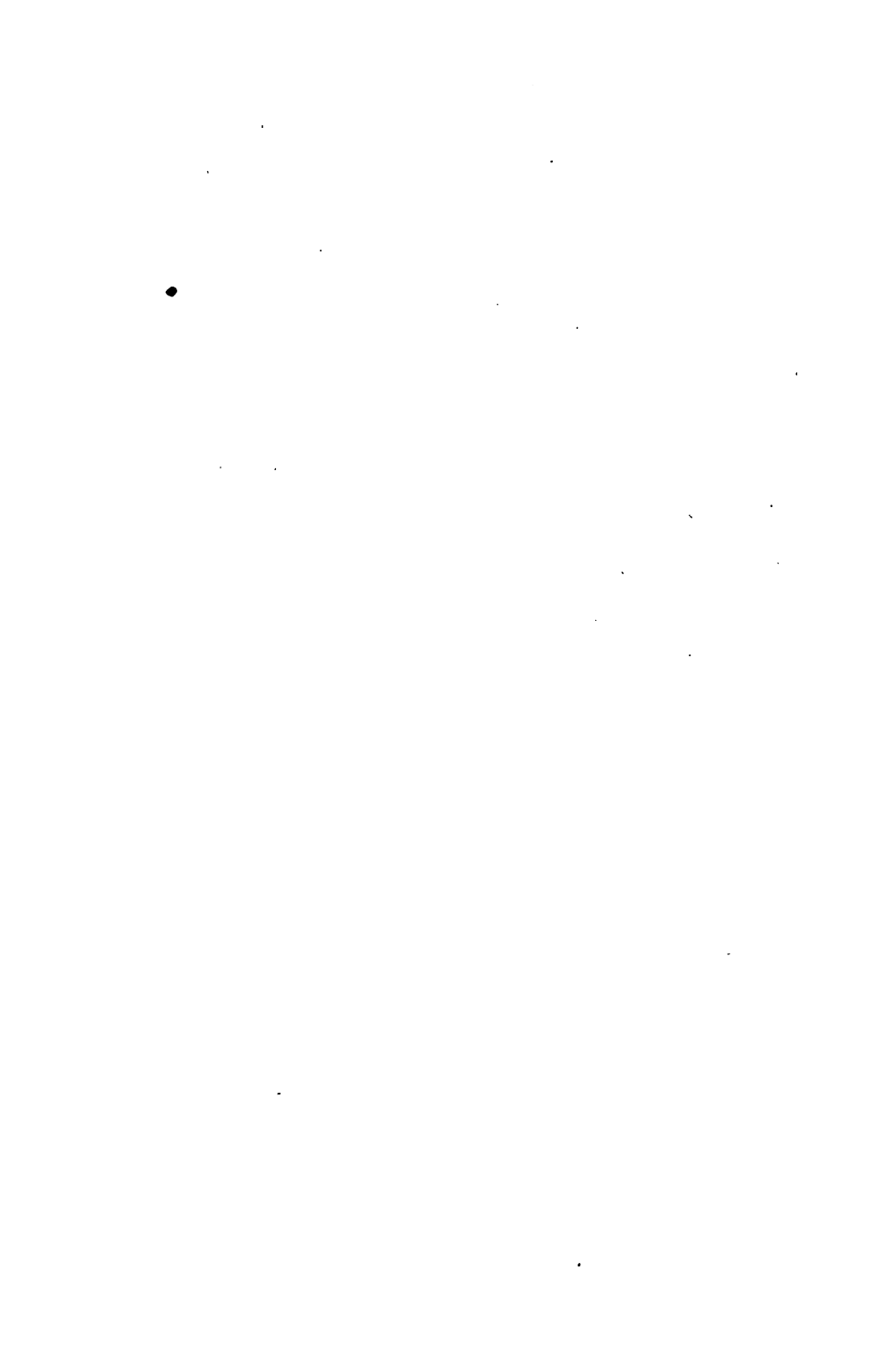
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**THE NEW GIL BLAS.**

**VOL. I.**



THE  
NEW GIL BLAS;

OR,  
PEDRO OF PENAFLOP.

BY  
HENRY D. INGLIS,  
AUTHOR OF "SPAIN IN 1830," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# THE NEW GIL BLAS.

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## CHAPTER I.

MY BIRTH, PARENTAGE, AND EARLY EXPLOITS.—I LEAVE MY  
FATHER'S HOUSE IN SEARCH OF PLEASURE, AND ENTER  
INTO THE SERVICE OF A CABALLERO.

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WHETHER the province of Andalusia, or the kingdom of Castile, had the honour of my nativity, is a point upon which there must ever rest some doubt. All I know of the matter is, that I was eating my puchero at Penaflor in Andalusia, when I was first able to distinguish one place from another,—a fact, that would of itself be conclusive, were it not, that I have some indistinct recollection of being carried in my

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**THE NEW GIL BLAS.**

**VOL. I.**

a scanty handful of silver; and not forgetting a crucifix, and a rosary, which I knew to be highly prized by my father, and which, I concluded, could not fail to be equally serviceable to me.

Although thirty years have elapsed since this time, I well recollect the eventful morning upon which I left my paternal home. It was perhaps, altogether, the happiest moment of my existence; in it, were concentrated, a thousand anticipated pleasures. All that the world had to offer, seemed to be reserved for my use. At a little distance from home, the road led me over an eminence from which an ample prospect presented itself before and behind; morning was now breaking, and Penafior lay beneath me. I stopped, and looked back: 't was but one sigh for Federica, the handsome Federica; one adieu,—partly to my father, and partly to my native place,—and I ran down the steep that

hid Penafior from my view, and soon reached the margin of the Guadalquivir, whose glittering stream, flowing away from home, seemed to invite me forward.

“Happy young rogue,” said I to myself, as I went merrily on, “money in thy pocket,—activity in thy limbs,—the world before thee, and nothing but kicks and stripes behind,—what good fortune is thine !” and proceeding in this fashion, sometimes congratulating myself aloud, sometimes inwardly, and often laughing for very joy, I walked down the bank of the river, while my feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground; but after a few hours, feeling a little weary, and hearing my money chink in the end of my girdle,\*—for I had not tied it up so close but

\* Almost every Andalusian wears a sash or girdle, generally of crimson silk,—and he carries his money tied up in the end of this.

that I might hear so pleasant a sound—I resolved to walk no longer than was agreeable to me; and seating myself by the brink of the river, I amused myself with counting my money, until some boat should pass down the stream towards Seville, to which famous city it was my design to proceed.

I had not sat a very long time, when a boat came in sight,—and having hailed it, I was received on board. Among the passengers, were a Caballero, and a lady, who seemed to be husband and wife, though no conjunction could be more unnatural. The lady could not have been more than twenty; dark, like all her countrywomen, and like some, with a tinge of Moorish blood in her cheek, her jetty ringlets, and coal black eyes, were beautifully contrasted with two rows of pearly teeth, just visible between the most bewitching lips in the world. As for her shape and gait, it is enough to say

she was Andalusian. The Caballero who stood beside her, was tall, muscular, and shapeless; his face was like a bronze statue, upon which time and the elements together, had tried their powers; only, that no statuary would have placed the eyes as distant from each other, as those of a Polar bear; nor would he have forgotten the rule, by which the nose is entitled to be the most prominent part of the face. Such as he was, however, he was the husband of this lady,—how, or by what means he obtained that felicity, may perhaps be told hereafter. It was easy to see, that the situation of the Señora was not to be envied: deep dejection was visible in her downcast eyes, as well as in the motion of her fan; and I found no difficulty in concluding, that she had either left her heart at Cordova, or wherever else she had come from,—or that she was ready to bestow it upon anybody rather than upon her husband.

Meantime, the boat glided down the river; I had already almost forgotten the Caballero and his wife, and was again occupied with my present good fortune, and pleasant anticipations, when some one touched my shoulder. I turned round, and saw the bronze-visaged and leaden-eyed Caballero. "Young man," said he, "if thou art inclined to enter into service, thou wilt find in me a master to thy liking."

"Señor," said I, "it is only a few hours since I became my own master,—and I have no inclination to part so soon with my advantage; thanks to you, nevertheless, for your offer."

"Thou hadst best consider well," rejoined he; "thou shalt be well fed, and well lodged,—and with the exception of a very easy and trifling duty which I will afterwards explain, thou shalt be as much thy own master, as if thou hadst nothing to do but to amuse thyself,—and more—

over," added he, "thou art at liberty to leave my service when it becomes disagreeable to thee."

This offer was not to be rejected: to be well fed, and well lodged, and to amuse myself as I pleased, promised well,—more especially since I should have the privilege of changing my condition when I had a mind; and besides, I augured well of my master's disposition, from his making choice of one as a servant, whose personal qualifications could not fail to remind him daily of his own deficiencies. I accordingly consented to enter into his service; and the same evening, a little before sunset, we reached Seville; and put up at the *Posada de la Concepcion*, the most celebrated among the hotels of that city.

My master (whose name and titles I found to be, Don José Andrades, de Carmona) informed me, that during the next two days, I might



employ my time in the manner most agreeable to me; and that at the expiration of that period, I should enter upon my duties in the house which he had hired. I did not fail to make the best use of my permission. The enjoyments of Seville are not to be exhausted in a day; and there are few of them that escaped me. I was charmed with the cleanness of the streets, and the whiteness of the houses; I was never weary of looking into the cool *patios*,\* with their fountains and flower vases; the size and magnificence of the cathedral filled me with astonishment; I was captivated with the beauty and

\* The patio is the luxury of a hot climate: it is an inner court, open to the sky, but the sun scarcely reaches it; and there is always a contrivance by which an awning may be drawn over it. The floor is of marble, or of painted Valencia tiles: sometimes a fountain plays in the centre; and a choice assortment of flowers—sweet-smelling and beautiful, is disposed around in ornamented vases. Here, the inmates escape from the noon-day heat; and here, in the evening, every family assembles, to converse, see their friends, play the guitar, and sip lemonade.—*Spain in 1830.*

fragrance of the orange and lemon groves that surround the city; and delighted with the *Paseo*,\* where for the first time, I saw collected together, every order of friar under the sun: but above all, I was enchanted with the ravishing charms of the women, who seemed to me, a congregation of goddesses. "This," said I to myself, "is a most charming kind of servitude;—the world is even a more exquisite place than I have ever imagined it,—happy day, when I bade adieu to Penafior!"

At length,—and too soon, the time allowed me by my master was expired; and upon the afternoon of the third day, I followed him to a large gloomy house in that part of the city which lies near to the bridge of boats; and there, showing me a chamber, he desired me to remain in it until I should be summoned. So far, I had no cause to complain; the room, which I

\* Place of promenade.

concluded to be that appropriated to my use, contained a tolerable bed; and in a closet, I found a well-conditioned skin of red wine,—bread, chocolate, melons, and other articles,—which appeared to make good my master's promise, that I should be well fed and well lodged; and in return for this, I was told I should only have to perform a trifling and easy duty.

## CHAPTER II.

THE EXTRAORDINARY NATURE OF THE DUTIES REQUIRED  
OF ME BY THE CABALLERO MY MASTER.—I RESOLVE  
UPON QUITTING HIS SERVICE; BUT FIND THIS DESIGN  
EASIER CONCEIVED THAN EXECUTED.

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It was nearly three hours after I had been left to myself, before I was summoned to the presence of my master. This interval I had passed not disagreeably, with the help of my provender; and the summons roused me from a doze to which some copious draughts from the wine-skin had disposed me. I found the Caballero, and the beautiful lady, his wife, in a large saloon, fitted up with great taste, and even luxury. Don José looked so hideous, that I

almost trembled as he bade me approach him ; nor could I help commiserating the unhappy fate of the fair creature who was bound in so dreadful a partnership.

“Young man,” said he, raising his leaden eyes to mine, “you remember our agreement. I became bound to lodge and feed you to your satisfaction,—and engaged that the duties required of you should not be heavy, or difficult of performance: you, on your part, engaged yourself in my service, the meaning of which is, that you shall obey my orders,—are not these the terms of our agreement?” I made an obeisance, — and replied, that such were indeed the terms upon which I had entered into his service.

“It is well ;” said he, “take this,” putting into my hand a leathern thong that lay upon the table, “the only service that I shall require of you is, that you lay twenty stripes upon the

shoulders of that lady, my wife: when you have performed this service, you shall be your own master until to-morrow at the same hour, when the same service will be again required of you."

This was a most unheard-of duty: to be fed, lodged, and my own master to boot, twenty-three hours and three quarters out of the twenty-four, I would assuredly not have strained at a gnat,—but I confess, that the price demanded of me for these advantages, was not at all to my liking. *Picaro*\* as perhaps I was by nature, harshness towards the gentler sex was no part of my character. I would rather have run my knife through twenty such fellows as Andrades, than have inflicted one stripe upon the charming Isabel,—for such was the name of his wife.

"Señor," said I, "this service, as you name it, which you require of me, I hold to be no part of our bargain; the duty of a servant extends

\* Roguish fellow.

only to the benefit of his master ; but the duty which you require of me, cannot in any way advantage you."

When I raised my eyes to the Caballero, after delivering this intrepid speech, I was surprised at my own courage in having dared to question his will. His countenance was more hideous than ever,—a dull glimmer shone in his eyes, which he fixed full upon me,—and then, without saying a word, he arose,—went into an adjoining room, and returning with a huge sabre, laid it upon the table, telling me it was folly to abridge the time I had at my own disposal, by fruitless opposition to his will; for he had no doubt I knew my own interest better, and valued my life more, than to provoke his anger,—at the same time glancing significantly towards the sabre which lay glittering before him; and I, for my part, already saw in imagination my head rolling on the floor. Yielding, therefore,

to the direction of the proverb, that says, *necesidad carece de ley*,\* I performed my reluctant task with the best grace I could, and in the gentlest manner I dared; firmly resolved, however, to be revenged on the barbarous Andrades at my leisure, and to leave his service with all speed.

“Young man,” said he, when I had finished the duty prescribed, “I am satisfied with thy obedience,—take this,” putting a purse into my hand, “and remember never again to question the will of thy master.” The purse—the reward of so ungallant a service, I ought perhaps to have rejected;—but the fear of offending my master by refusing his bounty, balanced the reasons for this act of greatness of soul,—and the weight of the purse (which was temptingly heavy), being thrown into the scale, there was no alternative left.

\* Necessity has no law.



When I retired to my chamber, I threw myself upon a chair,—and revolved upon the extraordinary scene in which I had been an unwilling actor. What, I asked myself a thousand times, can be the cause of so singular, and so cruel a proceeding? and I resolved before the next evening, to be beyond the reach of my master's summons,—or in other words, to have no master at all. "'T is, however, a good beginning in one sense," said I to myself, "a tolerable day's work for a youth in quest of fortune," emptying the purse upon the table, and counting over twenty as good dollars as ever issued from his Catholic majesty's mint, "and who knows that there might not be a repetition of this bounty?" But such selfish feelings were checked by a recollection of Isabel—and I again resolved that I would never more be the unwilling instrument of such barbarity. All that night I dreamt of Isabel, and her pity-

imploring eyes,—and the Caballero's hideous face, and glittering sabre,—and awoke with a more fixed determination than ever, not to remain another day in the service of so unfeeling a master.

No sooner had I dressed myself, than carefully fastening my dollars in my girdle, I cautiously made way to the entrance-door,—but to my dismay, I found that it was locked, and all my efforts to open it were unavailing. I next attempted to find the means of escape by one of the lower windows; but these also I found strongly secured with iron bars. “Here is a pretty business,” said I to myself; “I leave home in search of freedom, and in three days I find myself in a prison; of what use are these twenty dollars to me, if I am denied the opportunity of spending them!” Occupied with these gloomy thoughts, I stepped cautiously towards the saloon where I had left the Caballero and

his unhappy wife the night before, listening if I could catch any sound of voices, or of footsteps: but no sound was to be heard; the door stood a-jar, and looking in, I saw the unfortunate lady reclining upon a sofa, and alone. Her eye had caught my figure, or its shadow, and she demanded quickly, who approached? I presented myself at the door,—and in the sweetest voice imaginable, she desired me to enter. I immediately threw myself upon my knees before her, expressing my contrition for the part I had acted yester-night; and protesting, that nothing but the dread of instant death, could have compelled me to abuse so sweet a lady. “And yet methinks,” replied she, “I would have submitted to a thousand deaths, rather than have inflicted stripes upon thee;” but I told her, and I called all the saints to witness the sincerity of my words, that I too would have submitted without a murmur to the stroke of the sabre, had it

not been, that in consenting to live, I had secretly vowed to devote my life to the deliverance of so injured and so charming a wife, from the tyranny of so merciless a husband.

“Alas!” replied she, “were I to accept of your kind proffers in my favour, it would be at the expense of a brother’s life, and a father’s prosperity. But you are doubtless curious to learn the cause of the scene in which I am willing to believe you were reluctantly an actor. The Caballero will not return until evening; meanwhile there is ample time to make you acquainted with the circumstances that have brought me into my present unhappy condition.” I accordingly disposed myself to listen with impatience, to the narrative which shall be the subject of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE STORY OF THE CHARMING ANDALUZ.

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“IT must appear to you unaccountable, that I should be the wife of such a monster as Don José de Andrades ; for although I am far from vaunting my charms, as greater than those of other women, yet, it would only be affectation in me to deny, that they might reasonably lead me to expect an alliance more agreeable to my taste ; but when I shall have narrated to you the circumstances that led to this union, you will be inclined to pity that fate, which I should richly merit, had I voluntarily become the wife of Don José.

“ I am of the province of Andalusia, and of the town of Valenzuela, of which Andrades possesses the señorio. My father is an extensive occupier of olive lands under my husband; and until the expiration of my nineteenth year, I lived in my father's house, without a care, and might so have lived till this day, but for the malignant design of the demon, rather than man, who has made the possession of me, the price of a father's bread, and a brother's life.

“ I need say nothing to you, of the hideousness of my husband's countenance, nor, after what you have witnessed, is it necessary for me to tell you that his heart is as deformed as his face. Born, an exception to the beauty of his race, he early became a hater of his species; the tyranny which he has exercised from youth upwards, upon all who have had the misfortune to be dependent upon him, has made him to be universally hated; and even if he had possessed the

countenance of an angel, his bad name would have been an effectual barrier to his design of obtaining a wife, upon whom he might at all times have it in his power to wreak his malignant spite. Many attempts were, however, made by him; and he was careful to single out as the object of his pursuit, such as possessed the largest share of personal charms; not because he was an admirer of beauty, but because he was a hater of it; for precisely in proportion to the personal gifts bestowed by nature upon those who have had the misfortune to be in his power, has been the barbarity with which he has treated them. It was in vain however, that even with his great riches, he made proposals to several of the most charming young persons in the province, as well as in the city of Cordova; if he spoke to their parents, they, willing to escape the odium of a refusal, referred him to their daughters, and from them, he met with

nothing but abhorred looks, or contemptuous laughter.

“ In an evil day, he cast his eyes upon me ; he knew well that my father was dependent upon him ; and although I could not boast the charms of some of those high-bred dames who had rejected him, yet, I unfortunately presented in his eyes, a sufficient contrast to his own deformity, to make me an object worthy of his pursuit.

“ It was a gloomy evening within my father’s house, when Don José de Andrades demanded me in marriage. The old man hardly raised his head, while my mother did nothing but weep and lament by turns ; but my brother swore with a great oath, that he would snatch me from the altar, and that rather than I should be the wife of Andrades, he would with his own hand rid the world of so great a monster. As for me, I said I would die before yielding my consent, and it was finally determined between me and



my brother, that if no other means of escape could be devised, I should take refuge in the convent of Santa Monica in Valenzuela,—an alternative, far from agreeable to one, who then only waited the expiration of a definite period, to bestow her hand where she had already bestowed her affections.”

Here the gentle lady began to weep, in remembrance doubtless, of the fond hopes that she had once cherished; and after a short pause, she again proceeded. “Before finally resolving upon this step, I judged it advisable to lay open my heart at the confessional. There, in reply to my petition for holy counsel, I was told, that self-sacrifice is a virtue in the sight of heaven; and that I should be performing a more acceptable service, in consenting to be the wife of Andrades, than in becoming the bride of heaven: ‘since,’ said the holy man, ‘the dowry you would lay on the lap of God, might be the

ruin of your family, and perhaps, the curse of a father.'

"I dared not oppose myself any longer to what appeared to be the will of heaven; though I yet trusted, that in recompence for this submission, God would interpose between me and the dreaded hour. I made known to my parents, the resolution I had come to: they knew not whether to mourn, or to rejoice; but reposing on the spiritual direction I had received, they said, 'it is the will of heaven.'

"The day arrived, and I stood before the altar. Suddenly, and when the irrevocable vow was all but said, the quick trampling of horses' feet was heard without—my heart beat quick—'hasten the ceremony,' said Andrades with a commanding tone; the priest put the question, which, to have answered, would have been, to bind myself to the wretch who stood by my side; I remained silent; it was repeated. I heard the sounds

approach, 'never !' I said, and at the same instant a tumult arose at the door,—I heard the clash of swords: my brother, and he to whom I was betrothed, sprung to the altar; the vassals of Don José crowded into the church, and I saw both of those that I loved, bound, and led away prisoners; but not until the altar streamed with the mingled blood of Andrades and his assailants.

“ Alas! this affray, intended for my rescue, but sealed my fate. ‘Choose now,’ said the barbarous arbiter of my destiny, ‘choose now betwixt the death of those madmen, and an union with me. They have violated the sanctuary, they have spilled blood upon the altar,—and attempted assassination; I have but to speak the word, and they are delivered over to the hands of the executioner;\* but if you will instantly complete this ceremony, they are free.’

\* Leaving this village, I noticed two stone pillars, and a wooden pole across, indicating that the proprietor possessed the power of life and death within his own domain.—*Spain in 1830.*

“ Alas ! I knew the power of the monster who spoke ; and I knew the malignity of his nature too well, to permit me to entertain the smallest hope, that he would not employ his power so as amply to satisfy his vengeance. I yielded,—the vow passed my lips,—and I became the wife of Andrades. I never doubted of the treatment which it would one day be my lot to experience. I received, however, a longer respite from it than I expected ; for at the castle of Valenzuela, he succeeded for a week in restraining his evil nature ; but he has come hither, that there might be no witness of the barbarities which, from the first, he had resolved to exercise upon me. Last night was but the commencement of them. Wretched woman that I am ! there is no escape from my miseries ; for even were it in my power to obtain my freedom, that would but consign my brother and my lover to certain death. As for you, I have no doubt

that the same envious feeling, and diabolical purpose, that induced him to seek a spouse among the fairest of the province, has also prompted him to engage you in his service ; and that you, in your turn, will contribute towards his appetite for cruelty, and be made a victim to his hatred of the human race."

---

It was thus, that the beautiful Andaluz made an end of her relation. I had inwardly determined while she was speaking, that if I could conjoin my own safety with her deliverance, I would not be backward in making the attempt; but the concluding sentence of the narrative brought danger so home to myself, that my own deliverance seemed to be the first object ; and to this, accordingly, I resolved without delay, to bend all my endeavours. Nevertheless, I could not but feel some sympathy (the more,

that I might speedily require it myself) with the misfortunes, and unhappy condition, of the charming young creature who reclined upon the sofa before me. I told her, how truly I commiserated her unfortunate situation, and that if any plan could be devised by which we might both be saved, she might command my most faithful services. "At present," said she, "retire; to-morrow, God willing, I may have resolved upon some project, and will then speak with you further."

## CHAPTER IV.

FRESH PROOFS OF MY MASTER'S TYRANNY.—I RESOLVE TO  
BE REVENGED, AND CARRY MY RESOLUTION INTO IM-  
MEDIATE EFFECT.—I DISCOVER HOW THE CHARMING  
ANDALUZ STANDS AFFECTED TOWARDS ME.

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It was not with sensations the most enviable in the world, that I returned to my chamber. I was here, entirely in the power of a man, who, by all accounts, diverted himself with the sufferings of others, and if it afforded him pleasure to chastise his wife, might it not give him still more exquisite delight, to torture his servant. I drew forth my crucifix, counted my beads, and besides the repetition of innumerable *aves*, I invoked the protection of as many saints as I knew the

names of; but I received little comfort from this, and scarcely more, from my wine-skin, from which I took copious draughts. My heart died within me, when I heard the harsh grating of the bolt, and my master's foot ascend the staircase; and when a few minutes afterwards I was summoned to his presence, I felt that I was prepared to do his bidding, even without the hope of another purse of dollars.

"*Picaron*," said he, as I entered the room, "so thou hast thought to leave my service; is it not an understood part of our agreement, that thou remainest in my service so long as I fulfil my part of it? art thou not well fed, well lodged, and thy own master?" I was about to reply, that shut up in a house with locked doors, one could not well be called one's own master; but raising my eyes, the countenance of the Caballero looked so grim, and the glimmer in his leaden eye, so like a spark of hell fire, that my



words died in my throat: I plainly saw that the prediction of his wife was about to be accomplished.

“To-night,” said he, “we’ll reverse the pastime; ’t is but fair the lady should have her revenge. Madam,” said he, “return with interest, if you please, the twenty stripes which were bestowed upon you yesternight.”

“I’ll sooner die!” replied she with spirit. “Well, madam,” resumed Andrades, “so much the worse for this knave; for every stripe which you refuse to bestow upon him, I will myself bestow three;” and taking the thong in his hand, he raised his giant arm, which, had it fallen, would doubtless have left a scar for life: for my part, seeing the turn the affair was likely to take, I cast an imploring look at Isabel, who, at the very moment when the arm of Andrades was about to fall, interposed by signifying her willingness to do what was required of her.

Although I disliked the idea of losing my head by a sabre blow, and being huddled out of sight, I was no coward, and disdained to flinch from an infliction from so delicate a hand,—but in my heart, I vowed triple vengeance upon the ruffian who stood grinning approbation. “To-day,” said he, “thou hast had a holiday, I have required no service at thy hands; fall down upon thy knees then, and thank so indulgent a master.”

At this moment, a thought darted into my mind, which it was necessary instantly to reject, or to act upon: whether it was the humiliation of falling upon my knees before so execrable a monster that nerved me with a sudden resolution,—or, that the good saints to whom I had recommended myself put the thought into my heart, I cannot undertake to determine; but secretly invoking their protection, I formed my resolution. The Caballero stood before me,—and upon the table, at one side, lay the un-

sheathed sabre, the handle extending over the table, and within my reach. I fell upon my knees, in obedience to the orders of my master, at the same moment seizing both his feet, with a violent jerk I flung him from his balance, and he fell backward: immediately I seized the sabre, and sprung to my feet, and scarcely had he measured his length upon the floor, ere I transfixed him to it. As his blood streamed over the painted porcelain,\* I thought how fortunate it was, that the blood was his and not mine, and how easy a matter it would have been for him with so excellent a weapon, to have swept my head from my shoulders!

\* I was much struck with the interior of the houses, particularly with the beauty of the floors. These, throughout an extensive suit of apartments opening into each other, were covered with the Valencia tile, which is a kind of porcelain. The pieces of which the floors are composed are about nine inches square, the ground white, and each having a flower, or some other device painted upon it with the utmost truth and delicacy.—*Spain in 1830.*

"The saints be praised!" said I to the charming Andaluz, as I wiped the sword upon the damask, "this is a riddance." As for her, she could scarcely believe that the indomitable Andrades lay dead at her feet. "He's dead, sure enough," said I, as I held a light to his face, which was not only the face of Andrades dead, but Andrades damned; for so fiendish an expression was in it, that it was clear he had already entered among the fraternity of devils.

Isabel, thoroughly convinced that her husband's tyranny in this world was at an end, extended her hand to me in token of her gratitude for the essential service I had rendered her; and I, recollecting that I had at the same time rendered her a widow, saw no impropriety in taking the hand that was offered to me, and even of pressing it to my lips. This important act of the drama being now concluded, and having, by way of interlude, refreshed myself

with a morsel of *cabrito*, and a few mouthfuls of excellent wine, with which the Caballero had been regaling himself (as for Isabel, the sight of blood had taken away her appetite), it was necessary to resolve next, upon what use should be made of the event that had so happily terminated our captivity. I could scarcely entertain any doubt but that I should find in the Caballero's repositories, some considerable supply of gold, which, although perhaps legally belonging to his wife, I thought I had best claim to, both as her deliverer and as an indemnification for the stripes I had received.

"Madam," said I, "it must doubtless afford you the most lively pleasure to think, that you are now at liberty to bestow yourself upon the favoured person to whom you were betrothed, and who risked his life to snatch you from the altar."

"And yet," said she with an engaging smile,

“had it not been for your intrepidity, I should never have had it in my power to do this; and if,” continued the charming Andaluz, casting her eyes upon the ground, “I thus reward him who only attempted to rescue me, how shall I find means to repay the more effectual service which you have now rendered me?”

I was young, and inexperienced,—but not so young, or so inexperienced, as to be unable to comprehend, that I had made an impression upon the heart of the beautiful Andaluz; nor was I so indifferent to the charms of the fair sex, as to see, without emotions I scarcely wished to control, the humid softness that filled those dark eyes,—the deep tinge, that mounted to the cheek, and the jetty ringlets that half shrouded that heaving bosom; and yet, when I cast my eyes upon the hideous wretch that lay upon the ground, and glanced at my own figure in the broad mirror opposite, I could

not find great cause to be flattered by the sudden preference shown to me by the new-made widow of such a monster. Nevertheless, such moments do not occur every day,—and kissing away the tear from her cheek, with an air of the utmost tenderness, I inquired of her if she knew where Andrades kept his gold, for without gold, nothing could be resolved upon. She replied, with the greatest affability, that she could only suspect, but was not certain, where the Caballero had kept his gold,—and taking me by the hand, and stepping over Andrades, who lay just in the doorway, she led me into an adjoining room, where in a closet, the key of which I took out of the Caballero's pocket, we found four hundred gold pieces, which I transferred to mine. Isabel presented me also with a box of valuable jewels, the gift of her husband, and when to all this was added, a heavy purse from the person of the Caballero, and a gold

watch set with brilliants, it will be admitted I think, that even leaving out of account the tenderness of the charming Andaluz, I was not ill rewarded for my intrepidity.

Feeling that it might bear an uncharitable construction were I to leave Isabel in her present desolate condition, and in some degree perhaps, attracted by her charms, and particularly by the prettiest little foot in the world, which she had inadvertently shown in stepping over Andrades, I resolved that she should accompany me ; but in what capacity, I determined to be guided by circumstances.



## CHAPTER V.

I LEAVE SEVILLE IN COMPANY WITH THE CHARMING ANDALUZ: MY COGITATIONS BY THE WAY, AND THEIR IMPORTANT CONSEQUENCES.

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THIS was assuredly a very sudden, and agreeable reverse of fortune. A week had scarcely elapsed since I left home with a purse so scantily provided, that nothing but a miracle could have saved me from starvation; now, my riches were so considerable, that when deposited in my pockets (for my girdle was insufficient to contain them all), Isabel declared their bulk spoiled my shape. This objection however, I speedily obviated, by changing my own for a handsome suit of Don José's, which Isabel fetched me;

and although it can scarcely be supposed, that my slight and youthful figure could be greatly set off by the change, yet the ample dimensions of my new dress, effectually removed the deformity of which Isabel had so justly complained.

There was now nothing farther to prevent us from taking advantage of the change in our circumstances: taking possession therefore of the great key, extinguishing the lights, and leaving Andrades lying where he fell, we made our exit from the mansion; and repaired to the stable, where Isabel assured me we should find excellent mules. But here a difficulty presented itself; mules indeed, we found,—but Andrades having meant them for his own use, a side-saddle was no where to be met with. “There is a remedy for this difficulty,” said I, “if you will consent to it: I am but little taller than you, the clothes I have put off are at your service; and by their assistance we may extricate ourselves

from this difficulty, and have the advantage besides, of a double disguise." Isabel could allege nothing against this proposal, and therefore returning together to the mansion (Isabel being too timid to venture alone where Andrades lay dead) she made her *toilette* in the best manner she was able; and this done, we again left the house, and placing Isabel upon one mule, and throwing myself upon another, we sallied forth, just as midnight chimed from the cathedral. We took the first exit from the city that presented itself, for luckily, the house being situated without the walls, we had no gate to pass through, and we soon found ourselves on the high road.

As morning dawned, I perceived, with a smile, the strange and somewhat ludicrous appearance of my companion, who (besides that a figure somewhat *en bon point*, scarcely suited a dress which I had myself outgrown), had con-

trived to make some curious mistakes in the adjustment of her attire. As morning advanced, our appearance created considerable merriment among the early husbandmen, and persons going to market,—and when about breakfast time we made our entrance into the small town of Utrera, the ample folds of my habiliments, and the scanty dimensions of those of my companion, as well as their strange adjustment, created a sensation proportioned to the singularity of the spectacle. As for me, I rode along with the greatest unconcern, and as if I were at a loss to comprehend the cause of so much merriment; but Isabel hung down her head, and testified her embarrassment, by the haste she made to escape the gaze of the smiling tatterdemalions who sat wrapt up in their brown cloaks under the walls.

We no sooner reached the posada, than Isabel rectified the errors in her dress; but thinking

that her disguise in some degree contributed to my safety, I prevailed upon her still to continue it; but I agreed to her proposal that we should no longer travel on mules, but should continue our journey in a vehicle, something between a coach and a waggon—which the inn-keeper fortunately had to dispose of. But, when we were seated in the carriage, and again on the road, I felt that the last few hours had wrought a considerable alteration in my feelings. Isabel reclining on the sofa,—her glossy ringlets, her charming foot, her rounded arm, her faultless form, had created a tumult within me, and filled my heart, if not with love, at least with new and pleasing sensations, so that I coveted Don José's gold, scarcely more than his widow—but Isabel, upon a mule, trotting beside me in my cast-off dress, greatly weakened the illusion; which was indeed almost entirely dissipated by the ludicrous effect of her attire; for in all my

experience of the world, I have found that the comic is the deadliest enemy of passion. So it proved in this instance; for we had not been long seated in the chariot, before I began to entertain the thoughts of getting rid of my companion, and to consider in what manner this could be effected with the greatest facility. As for Isabel, I could perceive, that in spite of the unbecoming style of my dress, she yet retained a grateful recollection of my services.

But notwithstanding the evident partiality of Isabel, and that persons of a less scrupulous conscience than myself would have improved their good fortune in possessing the confidence of so charming a woman, I fully resolved upon separating from her;—there was doubtless some cruelty in this determination, though I speedily succeeded in quieting my conscience by the reflection, that the great service I had already rendered her, exonerated me from any farther

claims upon my good nature or gallantry; yet, being of too benevolent a disposition to leave her destitute and unprotected, I arranged in my own mind, a plan, which should be at the same time just towards myself, and generous towards Isabel. As for Don José's gold, I looked upon it as fairly earned; and it seemed to me also, that the jewels presented to me by Isabel were nothing more than a just recompense for her deliverance. Little did Isabel suspect what was passing in my mind.

"Harkee," said I to the muleteer, taking him aside, as we were about to start from Vizcayna upon the last stage towards Xeres, and as the night was already beginning to fall, "perhaps thou hast no idea who this chariot has the honour to contain?"

"How?" said he.

"The person who no doubt appears to thee to be a young Caballero," I replied, "is in fact

the betrothed of one of the greatest lords in all Andalusia, one too who will make the most indulgent of husbands."

"*Diablo*," said the muleteer.

"I have been rascal enough," I continued, "to carry her away; but my conscience smites me so grievously, that I am resolved to restore her to the arms of her lover, and thou shalt assist me in this design."

"With all my heart," said the muleteer, "if I am to get any thing by it."

"Thou shalt;" said I, "this purse will pay thy expenses to Valenzuela, which lies at no great distance from Cordova; and when thou art there, the friends and the lover of the lady will doubtless make thee rich for life."

"God grant it may prove so!" said the muleteer.

"When we approach Xeres," continued I, "make a circuit and return by the road thou



hast come ; the se norata will no doubt be asleep, and I will contrive to descend from the chariot, and make my own way."

"Leave the affair to me," said the muleteer, with that significant nod which sufficiently showed his perfect apprehension of my meaning.

My design was executed with perfect success : "Arre Colonel,"\* and away trotted the mules. Worn out with the events and exertions of the preceding day, Isabel soon dropped asleep, and as her head sunk on my shoulder I almost repented of my resolution ; but considering, that at so early an age, and but just entering upon the world, a companion could not be otherwise than an inconvenience, and consoled moreover by the reflection, that in inventing a story, and

\* There is always a mule called Colonel, or Captain, to which the muleteer addresses himself, prefixing the word *arre*, which is used by all muleteers and waggoners, to make the animals go.

separating myself from Isabel, I best consulted her own happiness, I gently raised her head from its resting place, and waited the moment of separation; at length I was sensible of a retrograde movement, and that now was the time. Isabel still slept: "buenas noches," said I, and vaulting from behind the chariot, I stood alone upon the road, while the sound of the wheels gradually lessened, as I walked smartly forward.

"A fig for love," said I; "have I not fifty ounces in my pocket!"

## CHAPTER VI.

I AM REQUIRED TO ASSIST THE REVENUES OF THE CHURCH  
AT THE EXPENSE OF A DUTIFUL NIECE; BUT EXTRICATE  
MYSELF FROM THE DIFFICULTY,—NEW PROSPECTS OPEN  
AROUND ME, BUT CLOSE AGAIN.

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WHEN I reflect upon my past life, I cannot recall many moments more consolatory than that, when as I stood alone, near the entrance to the city of Xeres, I exclaimed, “a fig for love, have I not fifty ounces in my pocket !” It was indeed a most natural exclamation; to be my own master, and master of so much money at the same time, was a conjunction from which I naturally drew the happiest auspices. I had never before known freedom; for no one can be

called free, who lacks the means of doing as he pleases, nor can one be truly his own master, so long as another is by, to ask why this is done, or that thing is not done. To feel perfect liberty, one must be alone.

When I entered Xeres, all was darkness, except the lamps that here and there burned before the image of some favourite saint. The shops were all closed, the streets were deserted, and in short every one was in bed. I was a stranger to the town; and clothed in the splendid habiliments from the wardrobe of Andrades, with my pockets full of gold, and knowing besides the bad reputation of the neighbourhood, I wished myself fairly under shelter. Gazing about in every direction, I at length espied a faint glimmering from a low window; and approaching, I perceived it to proceed from a handsome house, in which, as I paused at the door, I distinctly heard low moanings, as if

from a dying person. Heartily tired of walking up and down the streets, I ventured to knock; and without any prefatory interrogations, the door was immediately opened by a priest, who addressed me thus, "you are welcome, and I trust may yet be in time to be the instrument in the hand of God, of accomplishing a pious deed," and without saying more, he ushered me into a chamber, where on a bed, lay a man seemingly in the agonies of death; and standing by was a female in *deshabille*, who had numbered perhaps thirty summers, and who, instantly turning towards me, said, "it is a most unjust thing, Mr. Notary: here have I, ever since I was a child, been attending upon my sick uncle; and now, the priest who has sent for you, has prevailed upon the dying man to make a new will, leaving every *real* to the church."

"Father," said I, addressing the priest, "heaven forbid that I should interfere with the claims

of the church, and if this dying man cannot be admitted into heaven unless by making the church his heir, I am ready to do as I am directed."

"Señor," said the priest, "I cannot else promise him an immediate entrance into Paradise."

"But," said I, willing to discover whether the piety of the priest would tolerate the claim of justice, "would it not be best to divide the inheritance? holy prayers as yours would speedily release his soul from purgatory."

"Ah! my son," returned the priest, "twenty such inheritances are well bestowed in gaining but a single day from purgatory. As for the niece of this dying man, our convents are charitable, and will see to her. Pray Mr. Notary delay not the execution of this business; beware how you incur the sin of letting this soul escape unprepared,—for I cannot take upon me to administer the last rite, until this thing be done."

From the first, I had determined it should not be my fault, if the mistake into which the priest had fallen, did not turn to the advantage of the old man's niece. And now, beginning to perceive the advantage I might myself reap from preserving the order of inheritance, I strained my wits to the uttermost, to find some means of instantly settling the matter, as I every moment feared the arrival of the true notary, who might not perhaps prove so scrupulous. There seemed in short, to be no remedy but boldness and expedition. "Sir," said I, in reply to the priest, "I cannot help thinking, that the best service one can render to heaven, is to do justice upon earth; and to help others also, to the exercise of this virtue. This good blade," said I, throwing aside my cloak, and displaying the sabre which had so lately stood my friend, "is a marvellous ready executioner of justice; it is but a few hours ago, that to secure justice to one

woman, it made an exit for a soul far less prepared than yours no doubt is for eternity, and here seems to be another woman who stands in equal need of its assistance."

"*Jesus Maria*," said the priest, "holy mother of God, save us! this is no notary, but a brigand;" and before the words were well out of his mouth, I perceived the skirt of his cassock disappear at the door, and I was left undisputed master of the field.

"And are not you a notary then?" said the lady, with an expression of mingled fear and surprise.

"Charming señorita," said I, "you have reason to be thankful that I am no notary, for had I been one of that honest fraternity, your inheritance would, ere long, have been spent in masses; but neither am I a brigand; the dress I wear has the effect of making me seem older than I am, but if you will look at me more nar-



rowly, you will perceive that I am too young to be suspected of having already entered upon such lawless courses."

"Whatever you are," said she, "you have rendered me an essential service; and you have only to tell me, in what manner I am to repay it."

I had just begun to consider what reply I should make to this question, upon which, as it seemed to me, not a little depended,—when a feeble voice from the couch of the dying man said, "let the holy man approach, and administer the last rite, for I am dying."

"Ah!" said his niece, in a tone of self reproach, "I would rather have lost my inheritance, than that my poor uncle should die unshriven. I will yet go and bring back the priest."

"'T is of no use," said I, "he is already in paradise;" and in truth it was with the very last breath he drew, that he announced his own de-

parture. This was most seasonable, for scarcely had he ceased to breathe, when the quick noise of footsteps approaching the house, signified the arrival of the true notary, who finding that his services were not required, retraced his steps with some diminution in their celerity and willingness.

“’T is singular enough,” said I, “that in the short space of twenty-four hours, I should have had it in my power to avenge one woman of a bad husband, and to deliver another, the most charming of her sex, from a conspiracy to defraud her; but,” continued I, anxious to proceed upon sure grounds, “perhaps I overrate this latter service; perhaps the inheritance bequeathed, is scarcely so great, as to entitle me to feel gratified in having secured it to you?”

“Pardon me,” replied my companion, “’t is not less than a million of reals.”

“Ah,” interrupted I, “would that it had

been as many pieces of eight ! For my own part, I am so accustomed to large sums, that you must pardon me if I speak too slightly of the inheritance I have had the good fortune to secure to you:" and while I thus expressed myself, I could perceive that she whom I addressed, glanced at my habiliments, whose rich embroidery and costly materials at once pronounced me to be a Caballero of no small consideration ; while I, at the same time adding in a careless tone that the weight of my purse incommoded me, emptied my pockets of their gold, and placed it upon the table. The million of reals were not unworthy of my consideration ; and to become possessed of so pretty a fortune, I almost felt willing to make some sacrifice. I had already dazzled the eyes, and perhaps the imagination of the heiress, and it now only remained to make an impression upon her heart,—

a task which seemed to me no difficult matter, elated as I was with such recent success.

It was only now for the first time, whilst the dutiful and attentive heiress was occupied in performing some of those last offices which the dead require at the hands of the living, and while she prayed for the repose of the soul that had so opportunely taken its flight, that I had an opportunity of examining the figure and countenance of her in whose behalf I had exerted myself, and to whose reals I had begun to form some pretensions. I had at first guessed her to be verging upon thirty, but I now perceived, that five or six years might be added. Her figure, unlike that of her countrywomen, was tall, thin, and ill-proportioned. I missed the rounded arm, the well-turned neck, and charming foot of Isabel; and here, where the shade of tresses was needed, tresses there were

none : a small compressed mouth, that seemed accustomed to silence,—eyes that had acquired an expression of watchfulness,—and a sharp nose that harmonized well with the contour of both figure and countenance, completed the portrait of this dutiful person; and as I looked at her, I could not help feeling some distrust of my powers, as well as some hesitation in my purpose. But the former were perhaps spared a discomfiture, and the latter a disappointment, by the circumstance immediately to be related.

It must be recollected, that it was now the dead of night, or, at least, not more than one hour after midnight; and that, therefore, so prudent a person as this señorita of thirty-six summers, could not but feel the impropriety of being thus *tête-a-tête* with a Caballero, who had just given so convincing a proof of the boldness of his character: she therefore, in as delicate a

manner as possible, and repeating her acknowledgments in the handsomest terms, spoke of the necessity of preserving reputation from the breath of scandal; "for if," continued she, "by any imprudence I should give birth to——"

"Ah, Señora!" interrupted I, "I am incapable of so much baseness." But imagination had erred in finishing the sentence: the lady blushed, looked offended, and gravely explained; it was the birth of calumny, of which she spoke; and I could perceive that she considered my services partly cancelled, by my injurious interpretation of her meaning: and at this moment the frigidity of her looks, contrasted with the recollection of Isabel, and assisted too by a consciousness of my own merits, produced an instant change of purpose; so, cramming my gold again into my pockets, and saying, I should have the honour of waiting upon her at a more

seasonable hour, I left the heiress to her inheritance, and the dead man to her prayers, and making the best of my way through the streets to the outskirts of the town, I took the first road that presented itself.

## CHAPTER VII.

I ENGAGE A MAN OF THE WORLD IN MY SERVICE AS TUTOR, AND STUDY MANKIND; BUT BEFORE MY STUDIES ARE COMPLETED, I AM DEPRIVED OF THE LESSONS OF MY PRECEPTOR, WHO IS AT THE SAME TIME DEPRIVED OF HIS HEAD.

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AT the first town I reached after day-break, which, if I remember rightly, was San Lucar, I judged it advisable to change Don José's habiliments for others more suitable to me; and here, learning by accident, that two travellers were on the eve of setting out for Cadiz, and were desirous of finding a companion, the road being infested by robbers, it was agreed that we should travel together in a chariot, which we hired for the purpose. We were quickly upon intimate



terms; and before reaching Puerto de Santa Maria, every one was in possession of such a history of his travelling companions as each chose to communicate.

I had represented myself as a young Caballero from the province of Estremadura, of great expectations, and on my way to Cadiz for the purpose of completing my education. My father, I said, had engaged a tutor to take care of me; but having quarrelled with him at Seville, I had sent him about his business; and was resolved, when I arrived at Cadiz, to make choice of a tutor myself; and this story was tolerably well borne out by the quantity of money I lavished in all directions. As for my companions,—one was a bachelor of arts, a Spaniard by birth, but who had studied at the University of Paris; middle-aged, a man of the world like myself, a lover of pleasure, and who, from what I could gather, lived partly upon his money,

partly upon his wits. The other—the son of a wine grower, on his way to Cadiz, to open an establishment for the export of his father's wines—had accidentally joined company with his companion. It soon became evident, from the conversation of the bachelor of arts, that he aspired to the honour of holding the situation I had spoken of as vacant,—that of directing my studies, and perhaps of partaking my pleasures at the same time, and at my expense; an expectation in which I indirectly permitted him to indulge, for reasons that will appear hereafter.

“This man,” said I to myself, “has lived long in the world, he has doubled my years, and I have no doubt is a rascal at bottom. A man cannot live mainly upon his wits during twenty years without learning much, and I cannot do better than spend some of my *pesetas* in acquiring that knowledge of the world, which may teach me the secret of elbowing my way through

it. It is true, indeed, that experience might teach me, as it has taught others; but some hundred dollars are an easier price than, perhaps, some years of disappointment: it is true also, that I have hitherto been favoured by fortune, as this good purse will testify; but then, it is not every day one can hope to meet with an Andrades for a master—still less expect to cut short a service in so agreeable a manner.” In fact, such was my confidence in my companion’s knowledge of mankind, and in his ability to direct me, that I already all but promoted him to the office that was in my gift; and such was the sprightliness of his remarks, as well as the extent of his information, that before we had travelled together a single day, I felt that it would be a real misfortune to part company. “I was sent into the world,” said he, one day to me, “without a *peseta*, and yet I have never known the want of one.” And who, thought I

to myself, would not part with a thousand to possess the secret of never being without one! At another time, as we journeyed along, my tutor-elect observed to me, that he had served as long and as difficult an apprenticeship to pleasure as to learning; "because," continued he, "I had no instructor in it; but pleasure needs no apprenticeship: to learning we must ascend, as we climb the mountain—step by step; but pleasure lies below, and we have only to dart upon it, as the eagle pounces upon his prey: the greatest, as well as the least enjoyments, lie equally within our grasp; and all that is needed, is a finger to point to them."

The same evening, having crossed the bay, we arrived in Cadiz,—the emporium of pleasure, the citadel of luxury, the elysium of Spain; where the skies are always serene, and the wine always abundant; and where the beauty and grace of the ladies, are only equalled by their

affability. I immediately hired handsome apartments in the Plaza de San Antonio,—and having installed Don Fernando, as he was pleased to call himself, in his office of preceptor, I announced to him my intention of devoting the first three months of my residence in Cadiz entirely to pleasure;—a resolution which I lost no time in putting into practice. The very first day of our arrival, and while transferring to my plate a part of an inimitable stew, my companion took the opportunity of illustrating the advantage there is, in having a preceptor in pleasure as well as in learning. “Here,” said he, “is a choice of twenty dishes, not one of which perhaps ever crossed your lips; in how many wry faces, and nauseous morsels must your apprenticeship to good eating have consisted, before you had acquired that discriminating knowledge which enables me at once to guide you to the choicest morsels? It is the

same in all other pleasures." Scarcely, however, had I begun to appreciate the value of my preceptor's instructions, ere I was deprived of them, in a manner as tragical as it was unexpected. I had remarked that Don Fernando generally made choice of the by-ways, and that he also preferred the dusk to the broad day; and when upon one occasion I spoke to him of this peculiarity, he replied, that pleasures were more enjoyed, if come at stealthily; and that seeking them by by-ways, and in dusk, surrounded them with a certain secresy, that in his opinion, added a considerable zest. This answer seeming quite in accordance with my preceptor's character, I gave him credit for his excellent intention; and satisfied with his reasons, consented to be led by him every day, through the most obscure streets, and in the dusk of the evening,—convinced that he had only in view my greater gratification.

After having remained in the metropolis of pleasure three weeks, during which period I partook to excess of every enjoyment it affords, I found that my yet tender years were incapable of altogether withstanding the inroads which dissipation makes upon health,—and with the view of repairing the injury I had sustained, I resolved upon retiring a few leagues into the country, giving my preceptor the choice of accompanying me, or of remaining to take charge of my establishment; and he, having chosen the latter, I had leisure to reflect alone, upon how far my expectations of my preceptor had been fulfilled. In the pursuit of pleasure, he had indeed shown himself no novice, and on that score I was his debtor; but although I had been initiated into the mysteries of spending my *pesetas*, I could not perceive that I made any progress in the art of acquiring them;—and for all that I had seen of my worthy tutor, it ap-

peared to me, that if he was sent into the world without a *peseta*, and had notwithstanding never known the want of one, as he said, he must assuredly be an alchemist,—so excellent was his knowledge in the art of spending. But the taste I had acquired for pleasure, abridged the term of my self-denial, and I hastened to return to my lessons.

It was on the evening of the tenth day since my departure, that I again knocked at the gate of the house where I had hired my apartments. “What!” said the porter, when he opened the gate, and saw me about to enter, “and so you have the assurance to return? I promise you I’ll have no more rogues here: ’t is enough, I think, to have one man hanged from my house. Go about your business, and escape as fast as you can. I take it your neck is in nearly as much danger as Don Fernando’s!”

All this was an enigma.—“Rogues about your



house! one man hanged!—how! what is the meaning of all this?” said I. “I have only this moment returned to Cadiz, and know nothing of all that you are telling me: open the gate wider, I say, and let me pass to my apartment.” But it was instantly closed upon me; and through the small opening from which the shutter was slid back,\* I continued to plead my privilege and my ignorance.

“’Tis of no use denying it,” said the porter, interrupting me: “were you not his companion for three weeks?”

“You have not told me,” returned I, “what it is I have to deny: if you have any cause of complaint against Don Fernando, what is that to me? If he has committed any roguery, and if I were concerned in it, is it likely that I would come here in broad daylight?”

\* In many houses there is a small opening in the door, with a sliding shutter,—a sort of observation hole.

This argument seemed to have some weight.

"Tell me at once," said I, "what is the matter."

"Matter enough, truly; your companion is to be hanged to-morrow morning;—why," said he, perceiving by the expression of my face, that I was really ignorant of the matter, "your preceptor, as you used to call him, is the most noted felon in all Spain; he has personated half the dignitaries in the kingdom,—the archbishop of Seville among the rest; and some say, even the king himself."

"But," said I, interrupting him, "although Don Fernando is to be hanged to-morrow, that does not deprive me of the right of going to my own apartment, and claiming all that I left in it."

"'T is as bare," said he, "as ——."

"But my money—my jewels—my chest!"

"You'll find money or jewels as scarce there

as in the street; he swept all clean the same night you left him."

The porter, however, satisfied my curiosity; and I found all as he described.

I now directed my steps to the prison, where, if I should not succeed in recovering my gold, I was at least sure of the satisfaction of upbraiding my preceptor with his villany.

"No upbraidings," said Don Fernando, as I entered his cell; "I have deceived many greater men than you, and robbed many poorer."

"My unhappy friend!" said I (for just as he had finished the sentence, my eye chanced to rest upon his neck), "'t is truly a lamentable condition in which I find you."

"As for that," returned he, with a shrug, "it is very true that it could not have happened at a more inconvenient time, having just taken possession of your well-stored purse: 't was indeed a piece of singular bad fortune; but since the

affair is ended, give me the favour of your company to-morrow at the last scene of the drama, and you shall see how admirably I will perform my part."

From these words of my friend, lamenting that he was deprived the pleasure of spending my gold, I naturally enough believed that I should recover it; and I begged of him to have the goodness to indulge me with its restitution.

"I have not a *peseta* in the world," said he; "not one of your pieces is left: my pockets were loaded with them: I was recognized, and pursued. I reached the rampart, and sprung into the sea, in hopes of gaining a vessel which was then under weigh for the Levant; but the weight of your gold incommoded me, and I contrived to drop it into the sea,—and yet, as you perceive, this availed me nothing. I feel grieved that the gold should have perished, for as to-morrow will deprive me of the power of spending,

I should have had much pleasure in restoring it to you, but for this unlucky accident."

I thanked my preceptor for his good intentions, and took leave of him.

"I trust," said he, as I reached the door, "we shall meet in the other world; but stay, I had nigh forgotten: this"—putting a roll of paper into my hand—"is worth more to you than the gold I have deprived you of; 't is a record of my life:"—and I, taking possession of this equivalent, and without any farther observation, left my preceptor to his meditations.

"Consummate rogue," said I to myself, as I made my way to the street; "he has beggared me:" and I walked onward in no very agreeable mood, while every now and then the rich steam of savoury viands, issuing from the posadas and cook-shops, reminded me of what I stood in need of, and of my inability to procure it: but recollecting how many of my pesetas had been

exchanged for these delicacies, I boldly entered one of the houses in which I was the best known, resolved to eat a stew upon credit; but I speedily discovered how small was the knowledge of mankind I had imbibed from the lessons of my preceptor. No one was willing to trust a man whose friend was to be hanged next day.

This was the first moment since leaving Penaflo, that I might have wished myself again in my native town; but fortune, even in this extremity, was preparing a diversion in my favour. Occupied with the many reflections to which my present situation gave rise, I wandered as far as the Alameda; and throwing myself upon one of the benches in front of the sea, I fell asleep. It was a wild and varied vision that visited me: the events of the last few weeks passed in succession before me. I was in Don José's hall, again gazing upon Isabel, and stepping over her dead husband: I was riding by her side beneath the

star-light; laughing, as the day dawned upon her grotesque habiliments,—sitting in the chariot with her, and listening to the departing sound of carriage wheels. I was groping my way through the streets of Xeres,—communing with the priest in the dying chamber; and making my bow to the dead man's niece. I was hurrying through the obscure streets of Cadiz with my preceptor,—eating of choice dishes, listening to enchanting strains, and receiving the cup from the hands of charming women, who seemed all to resemble Isabel;—and then, I was hurried along by a great and motley crowd, who thronged round a platform, upon which stood a gallows-tree; and I saw my preceptor run gaily up the ladder, and nod to me familiarly; and instead of being hanged, some one swept off his head with a huge sabre, and his head rolled to my feet; and upon looking down, I saw that it was not my preceptor's head, but Don José's.

## CHAPTER VIII.

I FIND A PATRONESS, AND AM PROMOTED TO AN OFFICE OF  
GREAT RESPONSIBILITY.

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WHEN I awoke, it was dusk, and a lady, attended by a female servant, stood before me. No sooner did I open my eyes than the former addressed me in these words. "Señor, I was myself about to rouse you: passing this way towards my own house, I observed you asleep, and knowing it to be dangerous to fall asleep in this place, when the wind is from the north, I would have taken the freedom of awaking you."

"Alas! Madam," I replied, as the consciousness of my desolate condition rose to my recollection, "I can scarcely with sincerity return



you thanks for your kindness: there is nothing awaiting me that should lead me to covet the moment of awaking; unless indeed, that I might look upon such charms as yours."

The lady, without noticing the compliment except by a slight smile, said, "you do not look like one who might have cause to dislike the world; but if you be an unfortunate, follow me, and you shall by and by relate to me, what it is you have to complain of."

The lady whom I now followed to the eastern extremity of the Alameda, might be seven or eight and twenty,—her features were expressive, her figure well turned, and graceful; and both in her gait and dress, as well as in the manner in which she held her mantilla, and disposed of her fan, there was a certain elegance, that bespoke her a person of consideration: the fading light did not then permit me to distinguish her complexion, or the minuter traits of her coun-

tenance. "This adventure," said I to myself, as I followed the lady and her maid along the ramparts, "may possibly be turned to advantage." I was not indeed greatly skilled in the ways of woman; but the smile that followed my compliment to the lady's charms, had not escaped me,—and by it, I resolved to shape my line of conduct.

We stopped at the gate of a magnificent house at the east corner of the Alameda, near the palace—that quarter inhabited chiefly by persons of consideration; and the lady, desiring her maid to conduct me to the *sala*, said, she would herself follow presently. In a few minutes she entered, divested of her outer habiliments, and even of her mantilla; and I then perceived, by the light of the numerous wax candles which illuminated the apartment, that she was unique in all her charms: her complexion was of that clear, transparent, though darkish hue, that can-

not be emulated by the canvass or the marble, but which belongs exclusively to the breathing form;\* her eyes were full of lustre—but of that dazzling, and ever-changing lustre, that scarcely permits the determination of any precise colour; and her hair, of a deep glossy brown, fell in seductive tresses almost to her shoulder. Without allowing me time to express my acknowledgments for her condescension, she motioned me to be seated, and requested me to inform her frankly, what my present condition was, and what were the circumstances that had led me into it. Upon which, believing that the prowess I had shown in rendering some little services to her sex, could not fail to create a favourable impression upon her mind, I related to her all my adventures from the day I left Penafior,—taking care, however, to make no mention of

\* An exception might perhaps be made in favour of Murillo.

any thing that might be construed to my prejudice ; such as, that I had any personal interest in ridding the world of Andrades, or that I had appropriated Isabel's jewels to myself, or had done otherwise than restored her at once to her parents; or that, in the essential service I rendered to the heiress of Xeres, I had been at first actuated by interested motives,—and also passing lightly over my intimacy with my unfortunate preceptor: so that in the history which I gave of myself, I appeared as the bravest, and most disinterested of mortals, with only those few foibles, and guilty of only those peccadillos, that are inseparable from the character and conduct of an ardent and high-spirited youth. When I had made an end of my relation, the lady was so obliging as to say, that for the services I had rendered to some of her sex, I had a right to the good offices of all; at the same time she commended my courage, and disinterestedness, and

lamented my recent misfortune. "Now," said she, with the most engaging smile in the world, "listen to what I have to propose. I am pleased with the frankness of your character, and have long been in search of a person possessing that quality. Can you promise me sincerity, in the performance of whatever duty you may undertake?"

"Señora," I replied, "if there be any quality of my mind predominating over the others, it is sincerity,—for this, I have always been distinguished, and for its exercise, have sometimes suffered."

"Be assured," said she, "that in my service you shall meet with no such injustice: I believe in your profession, so now listen to what I am going to say. There is one passion, which I possess in common with all my sex; but, I believe, in a more exorbitant degree,—it is, love of admiration."

"Ah, señora," interrupted I, "would that all our desires were as reasonable, and as sure of being gratified!"

"I perceive," said she, "that you already begin to administer to this passion; let me then hasten to tell you, that in the duty I design for you, it must be forgotten. I know, that years have already wrought some alteration in my looks, and that the perfect freshness of youth is gone—do not interrupt me, this I say I know, but I would that no other than myself should perceive it. As yet indeed, time may not perhaps have wholly obliterated the traces of what I have been; but the hour will infallibly come, when the passion upon whose gratification I live, cannot any longer be ministered to; that hour, I am determined never to survive. I could not bear to see the influence I have wielded, wane; and it is accordingly this humiliation I am desirous of being spared. In this city,

where politeness is carried far into the dominion of falsehood, a woman who has once had her empire, and who still retains her rank, finds nothing so hard to be come at, as truth;—will you then accept the easy task of being sincere? into your hands, I am ready to confide that reputation which I have so long enjoyed, and which I so fondly prize. Let it be your duty to warn me of the approach of that day when I may find that I have outlived the reputation I believe—perhaps foolishly believe—I still enjoy. Your service will be easy of performance: every night I go into society, or have my tertulia at home; and all I require of you is, that before I hazard my reputation in public, you shall say, whether I dare stand the test. This is what I have to propose to you; tell me if you are willing to enter my service upon this condition,—your time shall be entirely at your own disposal, with the reservation of the few moments every evening

required for the performance of your duty ; you shall also have a liberal allowance, and be well provided for in my house."

This was a proposal which no one in my circumstances could reject. My whole duty consisted in scrutinizing the figure and countenance of a beautiful woman ; and as to the condition of sincerity, upon which my services were accepted, it seemed to me, as far as I could yet judge, that I might speak the truth, and yet keep in favour. I therefore hastened to express my willingness to enter into the service of so charming a lady, and to profess my entire concurrence in the condition required of me. Behold me then installed in my new office of censor of a lady's looks !—a post certainly in some degree derogatory to the dignity of one who, within a few days, had figured among the gayest Caballeros in Cadiz. Still, my preferment had its advantages : it had ease and plenty ; and



when the charms, of whose reputation I was the guardian, could no longer maintain their empire in the world, who could tell, if their depreciated value might not then be about an equivalent (with other more substantial adjuncts thrown into the scale) for the faithful performance of my services.

The very first evening upon which I was installed in my office, I also entered upon its duties; and I found them, as I had anticipated, not only easy, but agreeable. Shortly after the interview I have detailed, the Marquesa retired to her toilet; and after a reasonable time had elapsed in the performance of its duties, I was called to pronounce my verdict. Mine was truly an occupation that thousands might have coveted; and I prolonged my scrutiny so long, that the object of it began to manifest some impatience. "Señora," said I, "sincerity in my judgment, was the only condition you re-

quired of me; and where the admiration of all mankind is due, mine is surely to be excused." This was my manner of delivering my judgment, and the Marquesa seemed not to be displeased with it.

"Thou art indeed a lucky rogue," said I to myself, as shortly after the Marquesa was gone, a smoking stew, and a bottle of Paxerete, were placed before me. "This is vastly better than being hanged. Alas, my poor preceptor! rascal as he was, I wish he were here to enjoy a morsel with me. The Marquesa is certainly a charming woman; but whether she be entitled to the undisputed empire of beauty, is another affair. She has not the freshness of Isabel; but her charms are more seductive; as for sincerity—a fig for sincerity!—I know my own affairs. Here is an excellent soup, a good stew, and Paxerete fit for the Pope, and the Marquesa is undeniably the most charming woman in Cadiz.

Again my mind reverted to my preceptor, and his misfortune; and I now for the first time, recollected the roll of paper which I had taken from his hand. I drew it from my bosom, where I had deposited it: and having now satisfied my appetite, and re-filled my goblet, I unfolded the paper, with some curiosity to know the events of a life which had terminated as I imagined so little to the satisfaction of its possessor, and commenced reading the narrative which will be found in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER IX.

CONTAINING THE STORY OF DON FERNANDO DE RUBIO,  
FROM WHICH IT WILL BE SEEN THAT AUGURIES WORK  
THEIR OWN ACCOMPLISHMENT.

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“ It would doubtless be a pity, that the knowledge which I have obtained of the world and mankind, should perish with me : it will be of no use to me to-morrow ; and I am resolved, therefore, to let the world know that I have had full value from it, for the ill-natured trick which it is now about to play me. Know then, whoever reads this record of Don Fernando de Rubio, that I was born in the ancient and beautiful city of Valencia, just forty years ago ; for among other

singularities which my life will be found to offer, it is perhaps not the least remarkable, that the day upon which I was ushered into the world will be also the day upon which I shall kick myself free of it. I use this expression, because having seen several of my friends quit the world in the same way in which I am likely to do, it has always appeared to me a contemptuous, and therefore an agreeable manner of parting with it.

“ I could tell many stories of my infancy, and might even go as far back as the day of my birth ; but I will content myself with relating, that my destinies in life were altered by the mark of a ring, which appeared upon my neck ; and when my mother presented me to my father, and pointed out this singularity, so prophetic did he consider it, that, although he had destined me for the church, and a rich canon had promised me his protection, he resolved to breed me to some

other profession, that the sanctity of the holy Catholic church, at least, should not suffer by any disgrace that might overtake me. Had this unlucky mark not been at all, or had it appeared upon any other place than upon my neck,—had my mother been less officious,—or my father less a believer in auguries,—I might this day have been as far from the day of my death, as I am from the hour of my birth: but prophecies often affect their own fulfilment; and my life and death, perhaps, afford some proof of this.

“ ‘ He will certainly be hanged,’ said my father, half a dozen times in the day: ‘ Ah, my poor Fernando,’ said my mother, upon these occasions, taking me between her knees, and anxiously examining my neck, to see if the ring were as visible as ever, ‘ what can we do to save thee from the misfortune with which thou art threatened?’ My father would then shake his head, as if to say, ‘ God’s will be done;’

and I was left to the conviction that I must certainly be hanged.

“ But by and by, and as I became older, the *when*, became a subject of inquiry: the augury said nothing upon this head. It was only the manner, then, not the time of my death, that was a settled affair. I was yet scarcely more than a child, in years, but I was almost a man in thought. The prediction, a belief in which had at that time sunk into my mind, had produced a wonderful effect upon my character, and habit of thinking; and I was already indeed a philosopher, in my own way.

“ When I was first old enough to understand the meaning of the augury that concerned me, I cried like any other child who looks for a chastisement: this fear, however, slowly wore away; and gradually my destiny became, with me, rather a matter of curiosity and contemplation than of dread. I eagerly perused whatever books

contained any information upon the subject that interested me; particularly the lives of noted pirates and robbers, and of all who had ended their days upon a gallows. But these, although they made me well acquainted with the actions that usually terminate on a scaffold, afforded me no information respecting the termination itself. I grappled closer with the object of my curiosity; I particularly cultivated the acquaintance of Querubim de Berbedel, the city hangman; and perhaps I may say truly, that the most interesting hours I have ever spent, were those in the house of Querubim, in the Calle de los Angeles, when, over a puchero, which I sent for from a neighbouring cookshop, Querubim used to entertain me with sundry stories of the last scene in the lives of those who had been entrusted to his care.

“ ‘ Ah, my young friend,’ he would say, with an odd expression of drollery and regret, in which, however, the latter predominated, ‘ I



fear you will fall at last into other hands than mine.'

" ' It may be so, Querubim,' I would answer ;  
' but depend upon it, I shall never forget your  
excellent lessons.'

" ' The more sorry am I,' he would reply,  
' that another than me, should reap the credit  
of them.'

" ' At another time Querubim would say, ' Ah,  
master Fernando, if you saw as much of death  
as I do, you would never be sufficiently grateful  
for the prospect before you ; I generally hasten  
out of my house with a torch when I hear the  
little bell, and accompany the priest to the dying  
chamber—by which pious act I sometimes earn  
a real,—and when I see the tugs one has with  
death, and the long struggles of a death bed, I  
never can help thinking to myself, that they are  
best off, who receive a helping hand from me ;  
it is no sooner begun than ended,—and there is

always a good Franciscan by, just to whisper a word to St. Peter.' And in good truth, the discourse of the worthy Querubim received a strong confirmation, and sunk the deeper into my mind, from the death of my father, whose illness was of that kind that often led me to bless the augury, that ensured to me a less lingering, and less painful end.

“ I was now verging upon manhood; and the reflections that had been, up to this time, habitual to me, and the reading and conversation in which I had indulged, had laid the foundation of a system of action that sprung out of the peculiar circumstances in which I was placed. My principle was two-fold: first, to be beforehand with my revenge upon the world—which was one day to have its turn—by making the most of my time in it; and, secondly, to exercise my dexterity, in making that time as long as possible.

“ When my father died, my mother retired into a convent, and I was left with but a few pesetas in the world, and with a code of philosophy difficult to practise without them. All the world knows that in Valencia, a dinner may always be had for the asking; and until some change for the better should take place in my affairs, I did not fail to go every day to the Convento de la Santisima Trinidad, to partake of the hospitality of the friars. It so happened, that in this convent there was an image of a certain saint, an object of great devotion to the people of Valencia, on account of the many miracles said to have been performed by it; and it was the custom, that upon one day in the year this image should be exhibited to the devout of that city, upon which occasion, certain miracles were most commonly expected of the saint. Now whether it was, that the friars found a resemblance between my countenance and that

of their saint; or, what is more probable, discovered, notwithstanding my genuflexions, and other externals of devotion, that poverty, rather than devotion led me to the convent, they fixed upon me as the instrument of a pious fraud.

“ ‘Thy name I think is Fernando,’ said one of the friars to me one day, leading me into the cloisters, as I was passing out from dinner.

“ ‘Fernando is my name,’ said I, ‘and my name is all my inheritance.’

“ ‘Thou art poor, no doubt,’ rejoined he; ‘but I design that thou shalt soon be richer, if thou wilt consent to obey my instructions.’

“ ‘No one,’ said I, ‘can be readier to obey instructions that are to produce so agreeable a result;’ and the friar then explained to me, how that the finances of the convent were miserably low,—that a new organ for the chapel, and many ornaments for the major altar were wanted; and that on the occasion of the approaching festival,

when it was always the custom for the devout to lay some little offering upon the altar of the saint, it was intended to warm devotion by some striking display of the saint's gratitude ; and, finally, I was made to understand, that if I would consent to personate the saint, by wearing his garments and crown—to hold a silver salver in my hand, to receive the offerings ; and to bow my head, whenever the donation exceeded a *duro*, I should be rewarded with a thousand reals—but upon condition that I should immediately afterwards quit Valencia, and reside in some other town.

“ Nothing could be more agreeable to me than this proposal ; my devotion did not stand in the way of its acceptance,—for firmly believing in the augury that ensured to me timely preparation, and the assistance of a holy man, in quitting the world, I resolved that all my peccadillos should be rubbed out at the same time ;

and as for the condition imposed upon me, of lying elsewhere than in Valencia, I had already resolved upon quitting that city, and only lacked the means of carrying my design into effect; for knowing that the prediction could not be accomplished in France, where the office of my friend Querubim is performed in another fashion, I had determined upon leaving Spain for that country.

“ Upon the day appointed for the celebration of the festival, I was received by the Superior, whom I found to be the same individual who had formerly spoken with me, and who, with two or three others, was alone in the secret of the pious fraud in which I was to be an actor. ‘ By this,’ said he, ‘ we confirm the wavering, and strengthen the faith of the true Catholic, and thus, the end justifies the means.’ The habiliments of the saint were ample, and the image having been removed, I easily slipped into its place, divesting myself only of my cloak, and

found room enough within the foldings of the cloth of gold that covered my tarnished dress : the crown was placed upon my head, a well-contrived mask upon my face, and a massive silver salver in my hand, which, somehow or other, seemed to grow to my fingers. Thus prepared, the chapel railing was thrown open, and the matin bell began to chime.

“ And now the devout Valencians poured in ; and crowded into the chapel, where I stood beneath a silver-gilded canopy. The wants of the convent had been industriously circulated by the friars : nor had less pains been taken to encourage a belief, that some visible manifestation of the saint's good will and gratitude might be expected. The first that entered, were some beggars, with little more than their tattered brown cloaks to cover them ; and a few *quartos* dropped upon the salver,—larger offerings succeeded,—*pesetas*, half and whole *duros*, but no

sign of gratitude or good will yet escaped from the saint. At length, a gold piece rung upon the salver, and forthwith the saint bent his head. The miracle was seen by all; a thousand thumbs had in an instant performed the sign of the cross; a thousand knees were bent; a loud and earnest hum of prayer rose from a thousand kneelers; at the same instant, the organ pealed forth its loud anthem, and ‘Glory to God, glory in the highest,’ was the universal song of of praise. But the miracle operated in a more substantial form; the prediction of an influential saint was well worth the sacrifice of a few *duros*—gold poured into the salver; and to such an extent, that not only was the saint’s neck weary of acknowledgment, and his arm, of the weight with which devotion burdened it; but a new miracle became necessary; the salver was too small to contain its offerings, and the gold was beginning to slide off the heap: the saint,



therefore, withdrawing the salver, deposited the contents somewhere within the folds of his under garments, and again extended the vessel to the awe-struck devotees.

“The throng that had poured into the chapel, at length began to lessen; and mass having begun at the major altar, all hastened to place themselves before it, so that the chapel of the miraculous image was left for a time without a worshipper. Now, thought I, is the moment,—slipping my arms out of the wide sleeves of the saint, I disentangled myself from the cumbrous garments, which were stiff enough to stand erect without the help either of an image or its representative; the mask, I left propped in its place, and the salver also I would have left in the hand of the saint, had this been possible; but I was compelled to dispose of it otherwise; it followed its contents within my girdle; and having stealthily descended from the canopy, I threw

my old cloak, which I had laid behind it, over my shoulders, and drawing my hat over my brows, I walked leisurely out of the chapel, and through the church, and soon found myself in the Calle de Alboraya, and crossing the bridge of the Holy Trinity. What took place in the convent when mass was ended—at what time the discovery was made—or what steps were taken to trace the flight of the mock saint, I have no means of ascertaining, and never stopped to inquire; but satisfied that I had practised a less fraud upon the friars, than they had practised upon the people, I continued my walk at no unusual pace, that I might avoid suspicion, along the avenue that leads to the port—engaged, like others, in leisurely cutting up a melon, and eating it by the way.

“ With plenty of gold in one’s girdle, a helping hand is never far distant in the kingdom of Valencia. A Valencian pockets the gold, and

asks no questions; and mass could hardly have been concluded in the convent of the most Holy Trinity, before a fine scampavia was carrying me away from the city of my nativity, and shaping her course for Barcellona.

“ While sitting on the half deck of the boat, watching the coast glide away, I could not but congratulate myself upon the issue of this enterprise, the first I had undertaken. I was now free to practise my code of philosophy, as long at least, as a piece remained in my girdle. The sameness of the friars’ daily puchero, had become wearisome; and the monotony which moneyless pockets give to life, accorded ill with my felt capacities of enjoyment. Now however, I could fairly enter upon my plan of indemnification for the injury to be afterwards done me; and I might indeed be said to have already commenced my revenge. The coasting voyage continued favourable; and after having been

obliged to put in at Oropesa, and at Venicario, for provisions and wine, I found myself on the fifth day, standing on the quay of Barcellona, the richest and most commercial city in Spain. Here, if any where, said I, as I walked up the Rambla, a man may spend his pesetas to his liking, and find means too, to fill his girdle-end with them when it lacks weight. The first part of this prophecy was easily accomplished; here I served my first apprenticeship to pleasure; and notwithstanding the devotion of the good Valencians, my purse became perceptibly lighter. A man cannot be a philosopher after my fashion for nothing: pucheros even, are not to be had without quartos, until a man gains some experience in the world, nor even Catalunian wine, without parting with a few reals; and as for the favours of the fair, their smiles are not given as in Valencia, to a tight shape, sparkling eyes, and crisped locks, nor their ears won by a

*canto amoroso* : fine clothes, and fine horses, cost more than a straight limb, a knowing eye, and soft words,—and jewels are more expensive than serenades; in short, one day I shook out my purse, and the last piece dropped on the ground. ‘*Carba de San Pedro*,’ said I, apostrophising my purse, ‘I have had some pleasure out of thee, and be it now my care to see thee replenished.’ The silver salver indeed, that had returned so pleasant a chink to the offerings of the Valencians, still remained; but remembering the augury, I judged it wisest to take no advantage of it, so long as I remained in a country where it might find an owner, and where such persons as my friend Querubim find employment.

“Sauntering in this frame of mind through the streets, I chanced to reach the gate of the Dominican convent, which is always open to those who desire to have their faith strengthened by examining the pictorial record of all the heretics

who were burnt during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, or by saying an ave at the altar of the saint, who sailed in the short space of six hours from Majorca to Barcellona, with only his cloak for a boat,—or above all, by kneeling before the shrine of the Virgin of St. Pilar, the most popular saint in Barcellona. It was to this latter altar that I directed my steps; nor was this the first time they had strayed in the same direction; and notwithstanding the earnestness of my devotion on such occasions, I had not failed to remark the costly robes of this miraculous image; and in particular the valuable rings with which her fingers were covered, one of which was the gift of no less considerable a person than the Pope. A Caballero with so ill-furnished a purse as mine, might well ask so influential a saint as the Virgin of St. Pilar to fill it, and in short, so particular were my devotions, that the closing of the convent gates

surprised me in the midst of them, I was not, as will be recollected, without experience in pious frauds; and the tapers that burned before the altar of the saint, displaying in the most enticing manner, the brilliancy of the Pope's diamond ring, and recollecting at the same time, the saying of the Superior of the convent of the Santísima Trinidad, that 'ends justify means,' it was not long before the gem sparkled upon my unsanctified finger, in place of on the Virgin's; and having concocted my plans, which, as will presently appear, fully answered my expectations, I lay down under the altar, and was speedily asleep.

"The Dominicans watch their treasures well; and scarcely had morning dawned when one of their number, prowling about the convent church before the doors were opened, discovered a devotee asleep in the chapel of the Virgin; nor as I expected did the ring upon my finger escape

his lynx eye. I was questioned, and seized ; but this being an offence of so great magnitude, that it concerned the corregidor of the city, as well as the superior of the convent, I was hurried at an early hour to the public hall, accompanied by the superior, and other friars belonging to the convent of Dominicans, and followed by a vast assemblage of devotees, who breathed execrations against the wretch who had profaned by sacrilegious theft, the altar of the Virgin of St. Pilar, one of the favourite saints of the catholic city Barcellona. Had my friend Querubim been at my elbow, or seen me led away to the hall of justice, followed by hootings and charged with sacrilege, he would doubtless have remembered his prediction, that I might after all his instructions, fall into other hands than his, and sorely would he have rued the ill fortune that deprived him of the satisfaction of performing the last offices to a friend. However,



things were not gone so far; and my wits were destined then, as upon some after occasions, to postpone the accomplishment of the augury.

“ The charge against me was clear, and my guilt, apparently, undeniable; found asleep in the chapel of the Virgin, with the diamond ring upon my finger, a ring identified by the superior, and all the friars—nay even by the devotees themselves, who had so often prostrated themselves before her. Nothing else was expected by all present, than that I should be declared guilty of the sacrilege, and hurried off to judgment, condemnation, and execution: and such indeed was likely to be the issue, when I exclaimed, ‘ *Muy Reverende Padre, y, muy justo Corregidor*,—Condemn not a man unheard,—for in passing judgment upon my supposed sacrilege, you will be guilty of the far greater impiety of denying the miracle-working power of the Virgin of St. Pilar. Is not this saint the boast of your

city, and the consolation of the afflicted? and would you rashly throw discredit upon her sanctity? I beseech you then, most reverend fathers and just magistrates, as well as those many good Catholics assembled here—some of whom have doubtless cause to bless the Virgin of St. Pilar—to listen to the relation I am about to give, as to the manner in which this ring came into my possession, and to the proof which it will afford of my own innocence, and of the gracious condescension of the Virgin.’

“ This address, as may easily be imagined, excited no small surprise in those to whom it was addressed; and as my proffered narrative seemed to promise some new proof of power in the favourite saint of the people of Barcelona, although no one guessed what it might be, leave was given me to proceed with my exculpation; and I accordingly delivered myself as follows :—

“Yesternight, oppressed with the weight of sin, I resolved to seek the Dominican convent of your city (for I am a stranger in these parts), for the purpose of humbling myself before the altar of the Virgin of St. Pilar, whose miraculous power, and kindness to the afflicted, has reached even the remotest corners in Spain, and, to confess the truth, it was the reputation of this saint that brought me hither, from beyond the Sierra Nevada, and even from the farthest corner of Andalusia. It was already dusk when I entered the convent; and while I continued to rest upon the railings that inclose the chapel of the Virgin of St. Pilar, feeling that meditation and self-examination were necessary, to prepare me for setting foot within so holy a precinct, I heard the convent gates close, and was left alone in the church. I remained long in meditation, and it was approaching midnight before I had found sufficient resolution to throw myself below the

altar of the miraculous image. Long I continued in prayer; my face bent upon the ground; till, feeling in my heart that I had gained the favour of the Virgin of St. Pilar, I ventured to raise my eyes to the object of my devotion. The eyes of the Virgin were bent kindly upon me, and a benignant expression beamed on her countenance; but judge, most reverend fathers and devout magistrate—judge of my surprise, when the Virgin took from her finger the ring which you now see upon my unworthy hand, and extending it towards me, with an encouraging bend, and a smile of ineffable sweetness, seemed to say, ‘accept this as a proof of my good-will and miraculous power.’ Awe-struck and trembling, yet daring not to reject the gift, I rose from my prostration, and advancing nearer to the altar, and kneeling upon the highest step, the Virgin herself placed the ring upon the finger where you now see it. ‘Señores,’ added

I, in a bolder tone, 'it is a sacred gift—who dares remove it hence, or dispute the good pleasure of the Virgin?'"

"A confused murmur ran through the court; the crowd, which had every moment increased, already looked upon me as half canonized, and all good Catholics crossed themselves perseveringly; the superior of the Dominicans and the friars looked bewildered, and the corregidor irresolute. For my own part, I felt well assured how the affair would end. To deny the miracle, before so many bigoted Catalonians,\* was more than either the friars or the corregidor dared to do; and valuable as the ring was, the additional sanctity and power of the Virgin proved in the transference of it, would, when noised abroad by the friars, do more for the convent than the

\* Barcellona has always been celebrated for the zeal of its priesthood, and for the pains taken by them to hoodwink the people.—*Spain in 1830.*

restitution of it to the saint's finger.\* The conference, therefore, between the corregidor and the friars was not long: 'This is, undoubtedly, a wonderful, and well-authenticated miracle,' said the superior, addressing all present; 'the saints defend me from questioning the will of the Virgin of St. Pilar; let us return to the convent, and prostrate ourselves before her altar.'

\* The miracle would be at once credited in Barcellona. "In the year 1827, there was, in one of the churches or convents, a certain image of a virgin, who was represented black. It was at this time, that an outcry had been raised against the liberals, who were called negroes, (*negro* is the Spanish for black), and the rumour went abroad, that the negroes went to this church to pay adoration to the black virgin. Such being the case, the priests ventured upon and concerted a miracle, which might have the double effect of strengthening the faith of the people, and of bringing the negroes into still greater discredit. One morning it was publicly announced that the virgin had changed from black to white; and the good Catholics of Barcellona were invited to go and see the miracle with their own eyes, and they went by thousands. Let it not be forgotten, that this happened only four years ago."—*Spain in 1830.*

“‘Friend,’ said the corregidor, addressing me, ‘thou may’st keep the ring with which the Virgin has presented thee; but,’ added he, lowering his voice to a whisper, and with a significant look, ‘take my advice, and in future decline to receive presents from saints or virgins.’

“I understood the caution; and with my ring upon my finger, I left the hall of justice, presenting the sacred relic to the many mouths that eagerly advanced to kiss it; and not caring to remain longer in Barcellona, thinking it probable that the Dominicans might attempt to recover their property in their own way, I instantly hired a mule, and leaving the city, proceeded at a round pace towards the frontier, with only a few duros, and some loose reals in my purse.

“‘My wits get sharper,’ said I to myself, as I left Barcellona behind; ‘I was not wrong in thinking that, in such a city, a man might find means both of emptying and of replenishing his

purse; but I must not always fill it at the expense of one order of society—I must have value from them all. And with this resolution I entered Gerona.’

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Here I found a break, a blank leaf in the history of my poor preceptor; but upon turning over the leaf, I found he had continued it, though he appeared to have left unnarrated his journey and its events from Gerona, as far as Thoulouse. I confess the history had so much amused me, that the goblet of Paxarete remained untasted; and resolving for one night to forego the pleasure of scrutinizing the bright eyes in the Plaza de San Antonio, I recommenced reading the story of Don Fernando, which, after the break I have mentioned, continued as follows.—“It has always been my maxim through life, to provide timeously against the evil day; by which I would be understood



as meaning, the day when a man must grope in the very bottom of his purse to ferret out a solitary coin. Trust me, one coin is an exceedingly good help towards another; and wit, without gold to back it, is commonly unproductive stock. Like health, which must not be allowed to decay altogether before we attempt to build it up, so is the purse: when the *vis vitæ* gets too low, medicine may be applied in vain, it finds no aid within; and thus I say it is of the purse, that while it is yet round and healthy, it must be strengthened. And let me add too, that as it is sometimes necessary for the restoration of the body's health to impoverish it for a time, and even to withdraw from it a part of that which is its support and a portion of itself; so it is in renovating the health of the purse, which sometimes requires to be freely bled, in order that it may be invigorated. This manner of illustrating my principle is sufficiently natural in one, who,

as it will afterwards appear, took his degree in medicine in the university of Paris.

“Sometime before leaving Barcellona, and while my purse yet showed little sign of the atrophy with which it was afterwards threatened, I had provided myself with a suit similar to that worn on high days by the great lords of Catalonia; and having at Narbonne secretly disposed of the salver, which, by reason of the inimitable workmanship with which it was enriched, (by no less a hand as was said than that of Antonio Pascual), proved even more valuable than I had suspected, I found myself possessed of no inconsiderable stock of gold. Accompanied by my servant, whom I had picked up at Figueras—a countryman, as good luck would have it—and although the most cunning and lying of Valencians, the most faithful servant in the world, I made my entry into Thoulouse in the character of a Spanish grandee, which I well supported by

my proud air, and haughty bearing, as well as by my contempt of horses,—mounted upon my great Spanish mule, and followed at a respectful distance by Diego upon another, both riding with as much speed as the dignity of so high a personage as myself would allow; and with what the French call an air of *empressement*, I alighted at the Hotel des Ambassadeurs, at that time the chief inn in the city, and occupied the apartments destined for persons of the greatest distinction.

“ Scarcely had I arrived, when all the house was in commotion ;—the great lord was taken ill—the Spanish grandee was dying—the richest duke in Spain could not live an hour.

“ ‘ Ah, Dieu ! ’ said Diego, (for the fellow could jabber French), ‘ my master, the duke of Monte-Serrate, will assuredly die,—the envoy extraordinary from his Catholic majesty, will never live to deliver his credentials.’ ”

“ ‘The physician—the priest—the notary—which shall be sent for?’ said the landlord, with a shrug of infinite compassion.

“ ‘Which shall be sent for, illustrious master?’ said Diego.

“ ‘Not the physician,’ said I, in a low tremulous tone, ‘for I feel that I am past the reach of medicine; not the priest, for a grandee of Spain must not be shriven by a *Curé*; but haste, and quickly send for the most celebrated lawyer in this city, for it will require many hours even to enumerate the possessions which I must leave behind me.’

“ The landlord bowed to the ground, and retired to execute my wishes; while I folded my rich cloak round me, placed my brilliant diamond ring more conspicuously upon my finger, laid my well-filled purse, whose open mouth showed a deep mine of louis-d’or, upon a table, and reclined in the attitude of a sick person, upon

the well-pillowed bed. Presently the lawyer entered the chamber; a grey-haired, keen-eyed man, who showed by the empressement of his manner, as well as by the multitude of his bows, that he was well informed both of the rank of his employer, and of the importance of the document which he was called upon to prepare.

“ ‘ Sir,’ said I, ‘ a thousand thanks for this ready acquiescence in my wishes—but time presses; sit down, and I will dictate to you not the form, but the substance of the testament which I have called you to make. The lawyer bowed, flung behind the periwig, which the action had disarranged, and took the pen in his hand.

“ ‘ Excuse the feebleness of my voice,’ said I—  
‘ draw the table nearer to my bedside,’ said I—  
‘ and now listen. Imprimis, I bequeath twenty thousand crowns to my faithful servant Diego.’  
‘ Nay, good Diego,’ said I, raising my head

from my pillow, ‘do not weep; the legacy which thy merits demand, will enable thee to be thy own master, which is better than being the servant of even a grandee—do not weep, but go and prepare a fleet horse to carry thee on thy journey to Paris, with the important letters which I bear from his Catholic, to his Christian Majesty; and now, sir, I am again at your service.

“ ‘In the second place, I bequeath two thousand crowns to each of my thirty-seven servants in my two palaces at Barcellona and Tarragona.

“ ‘In the third place, I appoint the sum of fifty thousand crowns to be paid to Don Tomas Lamo de Espinosa, my physician, as a trifling mark of my esteem and gratitude.

“ ‘In the fourth place, I bequeath ten thousand crowns to each of the honest tradesmen who have supplied my household with such provisions as my estates do not grow; *videlicet*, my butcher,

my baker, my chocolate merchant, my water server, my ice merchant.

“ ‘ These, sir, are some trifling remembrances which may precede the disposal of the great bulk of my property.

“ ‘ In the fifth place, I appoint fifty thousand head, less or more, of Merino sheep, now grazing on the Sierras of Albarracin, near my Arragonese estates, to be—but stop, Mr. Notary, one thing I had forgotten, let me consider—that lazy *escrivano*, Morell of Barcellona, scarcely deserves a remembrance; would you believe it, sir—you would not,—you, who hurried at midnight to perform a kind office to a dying man;—that Morell, a notary who owed to me every real he had in the world, delayed till morning answering a summons I sent to him at midnight, to come, with all haste, and take my instructions for my last testament. God was pleased that I should recover; but, sir, the indolence of that *escrivano*

might have deprived me of the means of doing justice to my friends. 'Morell,' said I, 'I intended to have remembered thee in my will, and made thee rich for life; not less than a hundred thousand crowns would have been thine but for thy present misconduct,—but I will not leave thee a peseta! and the hundred thousand crowns I had intended for thee, shall benefit some more active and useful member of thy profession; one who does not, like thee, leave me to die without doing justice to my friends; I swear it shall be so, Morell!—no! Morell deserves nothing at my hands,' said I, in a musing way, though aloud, while at the same time I could observe the flushed countenance and anxious eye of the lawyer, who, dazzled by the brilliant legacies that had risen beneath his pen, and catching at a faint hope from my last words, almost began to entertain the idea of seeing his own name in the testament of the duke of Monte-Serrate.



“ ‘Sir,’ said I, ‘on the verge of the grave, as I am, half promises, even words scarcely unmeant, assume the sacredness of vows; you, sir, hastened to me in my extremity; but for you, I might have been in the condition in which Morell would have left me—burdened in my last hours with the encumbrance of unallotted wealth; and I feel that you have earned, and deserve the—the—lega—cy.’ The lawyer held the pen in his hand, while his keen, anxious countenance was fixed upon me in breathless attention, but I feigned to be unable to finish the sentence, and sunk back exhausted on my pillow.

“ Just at this critical moment, Diego, who had been well instructed, and knew his time, entered the chamber abruptly, and with a disconcerted countenance.

“ ‘Diable!’ said the notary, addressing Diego in an under tone, and with ill-concealed vex-

ation, 'what means this ill-timed interruption?'

" 'Only this,' replied Diego, 'I have scoured the whole city through, to find a strong, fleet horse to carry me with the duke's despatches to the capital, but being a stranger, no one will trust me with his horse.'

" 'Hush, hush,' said the lawyer, writing a few hurried lines, 'deliver this paper, and thou may'st have a choice of horses.'

" 'But,' said Diego, 'I must approach my dear master, to beg his blessing, and to receive a purse to bear the expenses of my long journey.'

" 'What is it I hear,' said I in a feeble voice, 'is it Diego? what does Diego wish? Come hither, my faithful Diego, approach thy dying master; but I am better now, and almost able to proceed with my testament;' and notwithstanding that the lawyer would gladly have

prevented any delay, Diego approached, to beg my blessing, and added in a low voice, yet loud enough to be heard, that he required a purse to defray the expenses of his journey.

“ ‘For shame, Diego;’ said I, with a heat that seemed to threaten suffocation, and which threw the notary into a fever of alarm; ‘thus, in my last moments, to intrude upon me such paltry concerns as these, taking from the little time left for arranging my important affairs with this worthy gentleman—alas! I feel my feebleness return.’

“ ‘Permit me, sir,’ said the lawyer, in a gentle tone, ‘to arrange this little matter; I pray your highness will not trouble yourself farther, and by unnecessary exertion endanger your valuable life:’ and without farther opposition on my part, the expectant of a hundred thousand crowns hastily wrote and delivered to Diego, an order on the bank of Thoulouse for two hundred louis-

d'or; and Diego, having once more approached my bed-side, left the chamber with his handkerchief pressed to his eyes, and as I afterwards learnt, forthwith received from the landlord of the inn the sum contained in the order, as well as a couple of fleet horses from another quarter; and while I was still employed dictating to the lawyer, was so far on his way to the metropolis.

“ ‘Let us now proceed with business, Mr. Notary,’ said I; ‘but my memory does not serve me to remember at what part we were interrupted—the testament, I think, was not concluded.’

“ ‘Your highness,’ returned he, ‘had just spoken of an indolent notary, called Morell, to whom you had purposed at one time to bequeath a hundred thousand crowns.’

“ ‘Which,’ said I, ‘I now bequeath to you; ’t is but a trifle, scarcely worth your acceptance, but will help to keep this evening in your remembrance.’

“I will not dwell longer upon my interview with the lawyer:—a hundred thousand crowns to one hospital, and fifty thousand to another; a million of reals for masses; and lands, and palaces, and towns, and villages, to the king, in default of an heir, filled up the testament.

“The lawyer was about to take his leave, in company with the landlord, who had witnessed the execution of the testament, and whom I had declared to be the heir of the diamond ring upon my finger, when I addressed them thus:—‘My worldly affairs, gentlemen, are now arranged to my satisfaction; it yet wants several hours to morning, these I am desirous of spending in the company of some holy man,—for though a grandee of Spain, I now feel it to be unbecoming pride to reject the counsel of the humblest minister of religion.’ And but a few minutes had elapsed, after the notary and the witnesses had retired, before a Curé made his

appearance at the door. I will refrain from relating all that passed between the Curé and the duke of Monte-Serrate; but after I had received all the consolation I needed, or the Curé could give, I said, ‘Now tell me, reverend father, if there be any churches, altars, or monasteries, in your city, by visiting which a dying man may obtain the especial favour of Heaven.’

“‘In the church of St. Saturnin,’ replied the Curé, ‘there are seven altars so blessed, that Urban VIII has extended to all those who visit these altars, the same indulgences which have been conferred upon those who visit the seven altars in St. Peter’s, at Rome.’

“‘Then,’ said I, ‘I am resolved to visit these altars, feeble as I am: day almost breaks, and the gate of the church will presently be open to the devout; but this gorgeous mantle is no attire for a dying penitent who would prostrate him-

self there; lend me thy cassock, reverend father, 't is a soberer and more fitting dress, and in an hour I will return to receive the last offices.'

"The Curé dared not well refuse this to a grandee of Spain, one too from whom he, no doubt, expected some considerable largess; an expectation in which I encouraged him, by saying, as I took up my purse, 'this shall purchase masses from thee;' and so throwing the Curé's cassock over my own cloak, which he had fortunately refused to allow me to throw upon his shoulders, I tottered with a feeble step across the chamber, and descending the stair unquestioned, and with the grave step of a minister of religion who had just issued from a dying chamber, passed the court-yard, and gained the street.

"As may be supposed, Diego was not absolutely beyond reach; he and his two steeds were waiting his master's arrival near the bridge, and before the sun gilded the Garonne,—or the

lawyer woke from his golden dream,—or the Curé missed his cassock,—or the landlord his guests and his bill, we had left twelve leagues of road behind us. ‘Two such horses as these in exchange for two mules, friend Diego,’ said I, ‘and two hundred louis beside, is a good night’s work.’

“ ‘Tis even better than your grandeeship imagines,’ returned Diego, ‘for here is also twice the value of the two mules from the purse of the landlord, who believes they are of the king of Spain’s own breed.’

“ ‘Thou’rt a treasure of a servant,’ said I, ‘a chief of rogues and a prince of cheats—worthy of the master thou servest; but thou shalt serve no longer; henceforth let us join our fortunes, Diego, and change characters as may be convenient. Let us be honest to each other, and cheat all the world beside; let us make a partnership of brains, and a community of



profits;' and so we joined our fortunes. But, alas! I never think of my valued and gifted Diego, without a sigh to his memory. He was sent out of the world before he had obtained half value from it, on suspicion of a crime of which he was innocent,—he was worthy of a better fate; and I might perhaps add, of an honester colleague.

“ ‘It occurs to me,’ said Diego, as we approached the next town, ‘that the jest might be repeated; the lawyers of Thoulouse are not the only rogues who deserve to be outwitted. It is but rolling up the cassock, or throwing it into a ditch bottom, and letting thy grandeeship once more appear. Horses, indeed, we can scarcely make it appear that we stand in need of,—but if we get nothing beyond a hundred louis, it is worth taking to bed for a few hours.’

“ ‘*Cuerpo de San José*,’ said I: ‘well thought of, and then it will be another step in my revenge.’

“ ‘ As for revenge,’ rejoined Diego, ‘ I should think little of that, if it brought no grist to the mill.’ And so it was resolved accordingly. The duke of Monte-Serrate was again at death’s door, and dictated his last testament to a lawyer (as fond of crown pieces as his brother at Thou-louse): a hundred louis were added to our stock, and I acquired also another cassock, which was disposed of like the former.

“ At length we reached the metropolis of France:—Here, I resolved to take caution for my guide; and in place of trusting to those random hits, which, if they cost little trouble, incurred considerable risk, I resolved that my wits should be a capital stock, bearing regular, though usurious interest. First, I entered myself of the university; and although Diego grumbled sadly at the delay which my studies threw in the way of gain, I convinced him of the advantage that would accrue from the acquisition of a

character; and accordingly, after a long period of self-denial, during which Diego, by his practice as a fortune-teller, gained just sufficient to enable us to preserve our stock entire, I walked one day out of the university, bachelor of medicine!

“ The time draws so near for the accomplishment of the augury, that if I were not to curtail this history, I could scarcely find leisure for rehearsing beforehand, the lessons once taught me by my good friend Querubim. I must therefore be brief in my narrative of the events, that filled up the ten years during which my wits never left me without a choice ragout. Ah! what days were these! gone—gone: no matter—although my years be few, I have lived long. I have lived all my life; and few can say as much.

“ First, my name figured at the corner of the Rue St. Jaques. ‘ Projects accomplished, and

wishes realized, by the secret aid of Don Fernando de Rubio, doctor in laws of the university of Alcala, *au troisième.*' During more than three years, I scarcely found leisure to enjoy myself:—how full the world is of projects, and how rife of wishes! Love and ambition brought many to my doors; but vanity and avarice brought more. Love brought the half-bearded boy, the budding girl; while, urged by its spurious relations, the hoary debauchee, and even once, in disguise, the emaciated Monarch sought my dwelling. Some would be canons, some bishops,—one desired the favour of the king, another that of his mistress,—these sought for high posts and court distinctions; and ambition *seemed* to be the spur, or avarice. But I discovered that vanity whispered louder than love, or ambition, or avarice. If the court page, or the city apprentice, asked to sigh upon the lips of his mistress, it was, that he might boast of it;

if the *dame d'honneur* desired the favour of the count, or the dimpling milliner, the homage of the *garçon bourgeois*, it was, because the heart of both beat less with tenderness, than the thought of triumph,—the vanity of distinction. If the curé wished to be a canon, or the canon a bishop, vain-gloriousness was largely mingled with love of power, and love of gold; if one sought to be the king's minister, and another his jester,—if one sought the civic chair, and another the chief *role* in the drama,—if a general would obtain a victory, or a farmer-general a contract,—it was in every case that the pretensions of others might be humbled, and that vanity might find food for indulgence: nay, the very monarch, who would have given a jewel from his crown to overcome the obstinacy, or virtue, of a victim, was incited but by the wound that had been inflicted upon his vanity. My plan was a simple one. It was, to encou-

rage hope—but to repress impatience; and the advice that is founded on experience of the world, and knowledge of mankind, will, if any thing can, lead to favourable results. But fame, however deserved, and reputation, however notorious, will die away,—and so I found it. No fewer projects were formed, nor fonder wishes indulged, than before; but Don Fernando was no longer a conjurer.

“ I now changed my residence, and my name. At the top of the Rue des Maturins, which is at the opposite extremity of the city, I became a dispenser of the elixir vitæ. No man who has not, like me, practised in this department, could believe in the attachment which men entertain for the life, which to others, seems to have lost all attraction. But this is, perhaps, natural; for we prize nothing so much, as when we are in danger of losing it. My doors were besieged by the infirm, the aged, the diseased,

—by wretches whose lives seemed to hang by a thread, and whose palsied arms could scarcely carry to their mouths the drug which they believed was to renew their youth. My elixir was but wine of Malaga, which carried warmth to the stomach, and exhilaration to the spirit; but the trade disgusted me; though at the same time, the scenes I daily witnessed, familiarizing me with disease and decay, more and more impressed upon my mind, the truth of my friend Querubim's opinion, and reconciled me to the fate that awaited me.

“The last profession which I practised in the metropolis of France, and that which I exercised the longest, was undoubtedly the most respectable. I hired a handsome house, in the most central part of the city, furnishing it in the most sumptuous and luxurious manner, and announced myself as ‘Professor of the art of enjoyment.’ I was here a Frenchman—for I

well knew, that although the French might believe in Spanish fortune-tellers, or Italian quacks, they would never put confidence in any other than a Frenchman in teaching the art of enjoyment.

“ My profession embraced the whole circle of the world’s pursuits and pleasures, and my pupils were numerous as my lessons were important. I lectured publicly, and gave private instructions; but the latter were most run upon; for few care that others should know their secret bents and weaknesses. Thousands were perfected by me in the art of enjoyment: thousands were made epicures of life; how many finished *gourmands*—how many refined debauchees—how many intellectual voluptuaries, (for my art extended over the moral as well as the physical world—the intellectual, as well as sensual pleasures), were indebted to my lessons, for the true zest and relish of living!



“ I believe I might, until this day, have continued to instruct mankind, and to postpone fate, had not my evil destiny, or my over zeal, or both conjoined, led to an event, that drove me from the scene of my pleasures, reduced me to beggary, brought me within sight of the gallows ; and deprived me of my dear friend, and able coadjuter, Diego, who, although I have been all this while silent respecting him, was ever constant in his zeal, and valuable from his services.

“ Among my pupils, was the archbishop of Paris, a voluptuary in every sense, and who had made nearer approaches towards perfection in the art I taught him, than any one save only his master. No one knew better than he did, that thousands pass out of life without having reaped from it half the enjoyment which it is capable of bestowing ; no one better knew, that there is not one pleasure to which art is not

capable of adding an additional relish, whether it be applied to the lowest of the appetites, upon which it is able to throw the varnish of refinement, or to the highest and most intellectual of the enjoyments which but the few can gather on the highway of life, imparting even to them a more exquisite charm.

“I was justly proud of such a pupil; he did credit to my doctrines, and in many substantial ways, repaid the pains I had bestowed upon him, and acknowledged the benefits he had received.

“I wished to reward him, and to collect around him, with a master’s hand, all the means of enjoyment which my art had taught. It was indeed the triumph of refinement over barbarism; of art, over unassisted nature; nay, art even assumed there, the dignity and the perfection of science.

“ ‘ Ah ! my best friend, and esteemed master,’

said the archbishop, ‘this is indeed life! lay aside thy professorship, and enter the church; I swear thou art worthy of a bishopric.’ But alas! my art fell short in one thing — it enjoined, but could not secure moderation; its very perfection tempted the violation of the precept. My pupil died in the midst of his debauch; and in the banquet of enjoyment that I served up, the pleasures of life exhausted themselves in death.

“ I feared the discovery of a dead archbishop in my hall of pleasure, and Diego adventured to convey his reverence elsewhere; but the project failed; and the death of the surfeited archbishop lay at my door. Diego was seized, and I never heard of him more; for fearful of unpleasant consequences, I threw up my professorship in haste, and exchanged it for banishment, in place of a bishopric.

“Destiny is not to be outwitted; a man may

delay, but he cannot avert his fate,—a strange infatuation generally leads him to the scene of its accomplishment. All the world was open to me, and yet, I returned to my own country; partly perhaps incited by the love of it, and partly anticipating the pleasure of a meeting with Querubim, and a renewal of those topics which had once such attractions for me, and in which I again felt a rising interest.

“At Madrid, I attempted to practise the professions which had proved so successful in France; but I found, that in my country a fortune could not be made either by aiding the accomplishment of wishes, by dispensing the elixir vitæ, or by teaching the art of enjoyment.

“My countrymen project little, and for aiding their wishes, they have a host of auxiliaries in the saints: ambition can have little scope, where there is little to bestow,—and love can scarcely require the aid of a conjurer, where its triumphs

are so easy. As for the elixir vitæ, I found no one who would have coveted it, rich enough to pay me for it, besides that most persons regarded it as an invention of the devil. And as for teaching the art of enjoyment, there are scarcely two ways of eating a puchero, or cutting up a melon; and in a country where nature, not art, is the purveyor of pleasure, there is no room for teaching. In short, I found my purse continue empty, and myself suspected of damnable heresy; and to escape the prisons of the Inquisition, I made a hasty retreat from Madrid, and began to look about me in Seville. Here I attempted many things; but pocketed few pesetas, till at length, disguised like a Capuchin friar, having begged a considerable sum for a religious procession, I left Seville with my gains, for Cadiz, and on my way fell in company with Don Pedro of Penaflor, an inexperienced youth, into whose good graces I insinuated myself, and grew fat at his expense.

“The few hours now remaining to me, will not permit me to fill up my history beyond an outline. I was left master of my pupil Don Pedro’s establishment, and I made myself master of his gold. Gold, as I have elsewhere said, begets gold, and I took advantage of my opportunity; but success has a limit, and wit cannot strive against fate. It is enough to say, that my project failed; and that the die is cast. Let me now remember the lessons of my kind-hearted Querubim, nor let me forget to send, as the duke of Monte-Serrate did, for a holy man, to administer to my spiritual comfort.”

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“And this then is the life of my preceptor,” said I, laying down the paper, and finishing my goblet of Paxarete. “Wit has been his only alchemy; and truly he said, that he had never wanted a peseta. Poor Fernando! now he

stands in need of neither." But as I glanced round the well-furnished chamber, and remembered the enviable post into which I had slid, I could not but acknowledge to myself, that the tragical end of so dangerous a companion might prove a benefit to me,—and with this consolation for the loss of my preceptor, I enjoyed more tranquil visions in the house of the Marquesa, than those which had visited me while sleeping on the stone bench on the Alameda.

Morning came, and brought with it a renewal of the agreeable thoughts with which I had courted sleep; I found myself during the day, as the Marquesa had promised I should be, my own master; if my stock of gold were less than before my preceptor had robbed me, I had at least the consolation of knowing, that the services of each day were renewing it; and that I had to provide for no one's pleasure but my own; and although a marquesa's domestic could

not well strut about the Alameda, or the Plaza de Antonio, with the air of one who kept domestics, and entertained even a tutor of his own, I found that pleasures are not confined to one sphere, and that independence is not synonymous with living upon one's own resources. In short, the day passed away to my liking; and I looked forward to the duties of the evening with nothing but pleasant anticipation. After having despatched an olla, that would have done credit to the genius of my preceptor, or his pupil the archbishop, and a bottle of nectar, that reminded me of the elixir vitæ, I was again summoned by the Marquesa, and found that this evening my services, though of a rather more complicated nature, were not the less agreeable: there was a tertulia at home; and when in the usual exercise of my duty, I was required to pass judgment upon the Marquesa, she informed me, that some of the most celebrated beauties of Cadiz



would that night be present ; and requested a new proof of my sincerity, in comparing her claims with theirs,—and as she spoke, I could remark how entire a sway the love of admiration had obtained over her mind. When she requested this favour of me, her voice faltered, and it was evident that she was confiding to me, the decision of a question upon which the happiness of her life—perhaps even life itself, was suspended ; nor could I help fancying, from the earnestness with which she spoke, and the agitation she betrayed, that this night was meant as a trial of her power, and that feeling in her own mind some misgivings, she was resolved to know the worst.

I promised strict obedience to her commands ; and that I might execute my duties with the greater freedom, the task of serving refreshments was confided to me ; and never, I believe, was there a company more assiduously served.

Many were the delicate hands that were extended to accept my proffer; many, the charming little heads that bowed their thanks; many a sweet "*gracias*," was pronounced by sweeter lips; nor could I help remarking, that the direction of the eyes was more frequently favourable to my scrutiny, than seemed at all necessary towards a choice of the fruits and cakes that were presented. Whether these things could have had any effect upon my judgment, I will not undertake to say,—but certain it is, that when, after the guests were gone, and I was called upon for a verdict, and was made to ratify my words, by invoking all the saints to witness my faithfulness, I made a mental reservation of the saint I had stolen from my father; believing, that if I had spoken falsely (of which I had some suspicions), he would otherwise have infallibly avenged the insult I had once offered to him. The Mar-

quesa, however, had no misgivings of my sincerity; and in this manner, nearly twelve months glided away. I passed my time in the most agreeable manner possible; and had every reason to be satisfied with my post, the duties of which had indeed long since ceased to afford me much pleasure, but which were easily discharged, and never failed to give satisfaction.

Some months had however elapsed, during which, my sincerity was put more and more severely to the test. The empire of beauty over which the Marquesa had so long-presided, was tottering,—new claimants to it had arisen; and I plainly perceived, that some decided mark of rebellion would ere long force upon her the conviction, that her reign had ended, and bring that day of humiliation which she assured me she could never survive. Should such an event take place, my services would be no longer needed, nor could I expect them to be rewarded

if they failed at the very point where they were most valuable. The same night accordingly, when I was called to the presence of my mistress, I resolved to take to myself again, that virtue, which was now my own best policy.

“Madam,” I said, “you have often reminded me of the condition upon which I entered into your service.”

“It is enough,” interrupted she in a tone of the deepest dejection; “I know it,—the freshness of youth is gone; my reign is over, and life is no more of any value to me. Accept of this,” continued she, taking from her finger a diamond ring of great value, “you have faithfully performed your duty,—now, your services are no longer required; and remember, in your after intercourse with the world, that the virtue which by me is the most highly prized, is not that which the world holds in the highest estimation.” With these words, she left me, and I never saw

her more. Next morning she was found seated before her mirror, lifeless; her fan was in one hand, and a miniature of herself, taken some years before, in the other. A phial, in which were the dregs of a swift and deadly poison, stood near; and upon a piece of scented paper her hand had traced these words: "During twelve years I have known only one enjoyment, the consciousness of exciting admiration: in the possession of this enjoyment, I have been the happiest of women; without it, I should be the most miserable. I have no reason to complain; my reign has been long, and I have been spared the humiliation of seeing my throne occupied by another: I have not courage to descend from it, and live neglected."

This incident did in some degree discompose me; but when I reflected, that in practising the virtues of sincerity and faithfulness, I could not be responsible for consequences, I recovered my

serenity; and by and by, even congratulated myself upon the policy of my conduct, which had gained so considerable a requital of my services as a ring worth at least a thousand reals; and with these thoughts, I found myself once more my own master, and turning the corner of the Alameda.

## CHAPTER X.

SHOWING HOW I UNDERTAKE THE MANAGEMENT OF AN AFFAIR  
OF THE HEART; AND HOW, AFTER HAVING MANAGED IT  
EXCEEDINGLY WELL, I HAVE GREAT REASON TO REGRET  
THAT I DID NOT MANAGE IT STILL BETTER.

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WHO should I run against but Juan Ramirez, an amiable young artist, whose acquaintance I had made while in my last quarters, upon occasion of his soliciting the permission of my patroness to take her likeness. "Ah, Señor," said he, "well met, have you obtained an answer to my petition? I am sure the Marquesa can refuse you nothing,—she will make a charming picture."

"Ramirez," replied I, "'t is the most unlucky

thing in the world. I pleaded your cause with the Marquesa with all the ability I was master of, you can form no idea of the earnestness with which I urged your request."

"And nevertheless she refused."

"No; she did not refuse, she granted my suit, and this very day you were to have been honoured with an audience; but—"

"Well, well," interrupted Ramirez impatiently, "if not to-day—to-morrow—or the next day. I am charmed with your success; all days are alike to me."

"And so they are now to the Marquesa—but come," continued I, "let us repair to the *fonda* hard by; I have not broken my fast to-day, and over a cup of chocolate you shall know more." And while we sipped our chocolate, I explained to Ramirez how all days were now alike to the Marquesa.

"And so," said he when I had concluded,



“you are without money, and in want of a place; you know I am but an artist, and have but little to offer; at present, however, I need the aid and counsel of one like you, who has seen the world; in the meanwhile come with me, and remain with me till something better turn up; and you shall assist me to the best of your ability in an affair of the heart, the particulars of which I shall lay before you.”

Well contented with the proposal, and with a fixed determination to act faithfully and honestly towards the open-hearted artist,—if this could be done without detriment to my own interest,—I accompanied Ramirez to his apartment in the Calle de san Geronimo, where, after an indifferent dinner, he gave me the following detail of the affair, in which he hoped for my assistance :—

“ You must know,” said he, “ that I have two cousins, both artists,—the one named Alonso,

the other Felipe; and that I have also a female cousin in the second degree, named Violante. Now, when the father of Violante died, he left his property to her, on the sole condition of her marrying one of her three cousins: she is one of the most charming señoritas in Cadiz,—but of so timid and gentle a character, that although two years have elapsed since the death of her father, and although importuned, as you may easily suppose, by each of her cousins, it has been impossible during all that time, to bring her to any admission of a preference of one over the others. But within these few days, she has been prevailed upon by her guardian, to resolve upon a method by which her father's desire may be fulfilled, while at the same time, she is still spared the necessity of making a choice: she has promised to bestow her hand upon whichever of her three cousins shall paint the truest likeness of her; and one month from

this time,—the morning of her twentieth birthday,—is the time fixed for the decision. Ever since this determination of Violante has been announced, I have been in despair. If she did not possess a peseta, I would give the world to make her my wife,—whereas, I am well convinced, that neither of my cousins (both of whom are much richer than I am), have any true regard for her,—but are only desirous of possessing the handsome fortune which was left to her by her father. As for the inclinations of Violante herself, she is so timid, that it is difficult to be assured upon that point; but I have nevertheless the vanity to believe, that I possess her good wishes: but alas! I fear they are fruitless,—both of my cousins are celebrated in portraits; whereas my skill, although sometimes exerted in the representation of the human form, is chiefly exhibited in the drapery: in short, my dear Diego, I am incompetent to the

task of painting a portrait of my cousin. This, my rivals well know; and accordingly they look upon the struggle as lying entirely between themselves: their portraits are already far advanced, but neither of the two has seen his rival's portrait; as for me, I have painted the figure of my cousin, but beyond a mere outline of a countenance which has little resemblance to her's, I have not attempted to go. We are all three on the best possible terms, although rivals; and this very night, we sup with my cousin and her guardian. This, my dear friend, is the state of the matter; and I pray you to set your wits at work, to avert the misfortune that is ready to fall upon me; I know how to reward the services of a friend."

I told Ramirez not to despair: "I have little doubt," I said, "but that some plan for extricating you from this difficulty will occur to me; meantime you must appear to your rivals, to

resign your claims: finish with all your skill, the figure of your mistress—a form may be a portrait, as well as a face—and abide my farther directions; to-night, you must introduce me to your rivals, and I'll warrant that before the month has elapsed, the affair will not look so unpromising as it does now."

The artist agreed to be obedient to my directions; and when evening came, he carried me to the house of his cousin, and introduced me to his rivals. If I felt a disposition to assist the views of Ramirez before seeing either his rivals, or the lady of their emulation, it was now increased tenfold; for not only were the rival cousins of Ramirez in no way to be compared with my friend, but Violante also was a far more tempting prize than I had ever been led to believe. I found her mistress of the most charming figure in the world; and of a countenance, in which the most seductive modesty, and even bashful-

ness, were unable to conceal altogether, the intelligence that occasionally flashed from beneath her eye-lids. "It shall not be my fault," said I to myself, "if Ramirez do not outwit these gentlemen;" and I accordingly set myself, as a preparatory step, to cultivate the acquaintance of those who were destined to be outwitted, and to recommend myself in every possible way, to their esteem and confidence.

Meanwhile, Ramirez played his part to perfection. He allowed his cousin to be entirely monopolized by his rivals; spoke dejectedly of himself, as an unfortunate artist, and of the art itself, as if he meditated relinquishing it to those who were more successful; by which manner of talk, the double end was answered, of misleading his rivals, and of interesting the feelings of Violante, upon whose preference the claims of the cousins might ultimately depend, in case of an equality in their performances. Before the evening ended,

I received a pressing invitation from the guardian of Violante, to repeat my visit; and this being overheard by the two artists, I was from that moment numbered among their friends.

I did not neglect to improve my opportunity; I constantly spoke to both, as if Ramirez had abandoned his pretensions. And in the success of each of his rivals, I professed the warmest interest. To the fair object of their individual pretensions, I spoke with befitting reserve of the approaching crisis,—which it was evident she herself did not anticipate with any very eager longing. Of Ramirez, I spoke to her, as of one deserving pity; and yet, by an occasional *inuendo*, I hinted, that although his hopes were small, he had not allowed himself entirely to despair.

It was understood that, previous to the decisive morning, each of the three candidates for Violante's favour, should present his present,—a custom which in Cadiz has been imported from

France, and which, although usually the offering only of a husband elect, was meant in this instance, to be typical of the hopes of each. My friend, being poor as a rat, could not vie with his rivals in the costliness of his offerings: it would have spent a year's revenue to have presented his cousin with a necklace worthy of her acceptance. "Do not think of it, my friend," said I, "leave the affair to me:" and accordingly, having first ascertained upon what day the two rival artists were to send their gifts, I chose the day following, when the glitter of their jewels might have passed from Violante's eyes; and I then presented myself before her as the bearer of my friend's humble offering. "'T is all," said I, "he has to offer;—alas! poor Juan well knows the advantage his rivals possess: they are rich, because their skill in portraits ministers to the vanity of mankind; he is poor, because vanity is the universal passion: this," said I, "is



his offering"—drawing from the basket one of those white veils of beautiful texture, behind which the women of Georgia so successfully hide their charms—"he sends you this, that on the bridal morning you may, in compassion, conceal those charms which he dare not hope can ever be his."

The eventful day approached; and now it was on the morrow, at an early hour, that the fate of the cousins was to be determined, and along with it the condition of my purse. It was towards evening, then, that I took my way to the apartment of the artist Alonso. I found him in his *studio*, contemplating, with looks of evident satisfaction, a picture of a female, which he had just placed in the most advantageous light; the finishing touch of the painter was yet wet upon the thick tresses that veiled her bosom. Alonso hastily turned the picture.

"How now, my friend," said I, as I entered;

“to-morrow the birth-day of the señorita,—and where is thy painting?”

“The picture is ready,” replied Alonso.

“And so is your rival’s,” returned I. “I have but now left him; he had just thrown down his brush; it is a choice picture I assure you:—but show me yours.” “An excellent picture, truly,—an excellent picture,” said I, as Alonso turned it round: “but—”

“But not equal to my rival’s, you would say.”

“Equal! nay, superior to his,” rejoined I; “but not so likely to please her for whom it is designed: the other is the portrait of a more beautiful countenance.”

A pause ensued—both of us continuing to look at the picture.

“I was almost so much your friend,” resumed I, “as to wish a few moments ago, that I had your rival’s picture under my brush for one second; I’d soon spoil that angelic smile that

hovers round her lips; I'd make a caricature of your cousin."

"Would that you had," said Alonso, thoughtfully.

"Nay," returned I, "that is your business, not mine; but Felipe sups with *us* to night, and I know that Ramirez has got some choice wine, that will scarcely let him go before midnight. All will be still about eleven; and you know the way to his studio. I had once hopes for my friend Ramirez; but as these are ended, my good wishes are with you; and I can tell you in confidence, that Violante is not insensible,—you understand me? when the old cathedral tolls eleven, then."—

A squeeze of the hand told me that my hint should not pass disregarded, and I took my leave.

"Stay," said Alonso, as I was closing the door, "my cousin told me that fortune had used you hardly;" and so saying, he slipt into my hand a

charmingly weighty purse, which I allowed my fingers to close upon with much apparent reluctance; and with many sincere self-gratulations upon the success of my plan. It was not many minutes after I had left the one rival, before I entered the *studio* of the other, whom I found employed nearly in the manner that I had represented. "Ah, Felipe," said I, "my poor friend, you may burn your brushes when you please; Alonso will assuredly carry off the prize."

"Have you seen his picture?" demanded Felipe, impatiently.

"It is Violante herself," returned I, "it is Violante herself: your picture," turning to Felipe's work, "is the portrait of a pretty woman, but it is not the portrait of your cousin; her eyes, Felipe! it is there that your rival has shown his skill. So truly am I *your* friend," added I, taking Felipe by the hand, and throwing into my countenance an expression of sor-

row; "that since I know it to be impossible for my friend Ramirez to obtain the hand of his cousin;—for I candidly confess, that had that been possible; but, as I say, that being out of the question, I would give something—though God knows I have little to give—to see you fairly in possession: even now, when Alonso left me for a moment in his studio, I was almost tempted to take up his brush, and turn his picture into a caricature."

"There is, then, no remedy," said Felipe.

"There is nothing without a remedy," I replied, "so as we have but courage to attempt it."

"Show me how," returned Felipe, "and you shall not long have it in your power to say that you have little to give; you shall find that I know how to estimate a kindness."

"Alonso," said I, "sups with us to-night;—it is only vaulting over his garden wall, when the

cathedral tolls eleven; he will scarcely leave us till midnight: it is full-moon to-night, and the picture cannot be mistaken; and, besides, my friend, I can tell you that Violante herself will rejoice in the effects of this stratagem,—and as she must no doubt keep her promise, 't would be a pity, truly, if her promise were to stand in the way of her inclinations—for, trust me, my friend, I know where *they* point:—nine to-morrow morning is the hour; and the discovery and the hour will arrive together. At eleven, then.”—“ At eleven,” said Felipe; “ but,” added he, “ I had almost forgotten; Ramirez, poor fellow, I am sure entertains you but indifferently, and I have heard of your misfortune,—do not, I pray you be offended, if I force this into your hands.” And so saying, a rival to Alonso's bounty found its way into my pocket.

“ This,” said I to myself, as I took my way towards Ramirez' apartment, “ turns out mar-

vellously well; if my plan prospers to the end, I shall be made for life; and even if it fail, I have not altogether lost my labour; for by the weight of these purses, which I long to examine, I judge that my afternoon's work has not been badly requited." With these thoughts, I reached my friend's house: "keep up your spirits," said I, "I am not without hopes that all will go well;" and over a bottle of excellent wine (for which I changed one of my pieces), we drank success to our hopes; and I received from Ramirez a writing, by which he bound himself to transfer four thousand crowns to my pocket, the day he wedded his cousin. "Ah, Diego," said he as he gave it to me, "would to God they were yours!"—a wish in which I fully sympathised.

As eleven tolled from the tower of the cathedral, I was posted in a convenient place, that I might ascertain the success of my stratagem; and, almost immediately after the last toll, I

perceived the two artists, muffled closely up in their cloaks, pass each other, each stealing softly towards his rival's studio. "Poor dupes," said I, as I saw them shortly after return, each satisfied in his own mind, that he had made a caricature of his rival's performance; and it being by this time close upon midnight. The artists as I afterwards learned, each secure in his own success, immediately upon reaching their studios threw himself upon his bed, having first neatly folded up his picture by the light of the moon, to be ready against morning.

The morning came; and precisely at the appointed hour, I accompanied my friend to the house of his charming cousin, who was that day to become a bride; but the bride of whom, no one could yet tell. She wore the veil I had presented to her as the gift of my friend; who, being ignorant of what had been the nature of the present I had made in his name, smiled with



pleasure as he recollected that, he had followed my advice as to the manner of finishing his picture. When I looked at Violante, and saw the perfect symmetry of that form which her bridal dress so charmingly set off; the beautiful little foot that peeped below it; the rounded shoulder, that scarcely brooked confinement, and would ever be rivalling the snow of the robe that embraced it; the faint carnation, that as we entered suffused the neck telling, of the warmer blush that then crimsoned the cheek, hidden behind the folds of the veil, that also shrouded a world of other charms;—I say, that when I looked upon this yet unclaimed bride, I felt only one regret; and that was, that I had not set my wits to work for myself, in place of for my friend. It was now too late, however, to think of repairing this error; and therefore, consoling myself with the hope of her being my friend's wife since she could not be my own, and with

the credit of having acted disinterestedly, I impatiently waited the arrival of my two dupes.

They, as sometimes happens on the eve of an important event, slept until it was almost time to present themselves at the house of their cousin,—their heaviness being probably occasioned by the weight of their golden dreams,—and taking their ready folded-up pictures under their arms, they hastened to the rendezvous.

The guardian of the fair Violante was a very formal old gentleman, and would have the thing done with all the ceremony and seriousness that were befitting upon an affair so serious as the disposal of a ward possessing two millions of reals, to say nothing of her personal charms, of which he was not a little proud. To him, she had modestly deputed the task of deciding upon the respective merits of the portraits; accordingly, seating himself on his large chair with all the importance of a judge, and placing

his ward at his right hand, he desired the rival candidates to make good their claims; when, almost at the same moment, Alonso and Felipe uncovered their pictures, each with an air of triumph turning them towards the judge.

The moment I cast my eyes upon them, I burst into an immoderate fit of laughter,—as indeed was most natural, for Alonso's portrait represented his cousin with only one eye, while in that of Felipe, her mouth had received a paralytic stroke: the countenance of my friend Juan at this moment expressed the utmost astonishment; as no doubt, that of the lovely bride would also have done, had she thrown back her veil,—as for the old guardian, wrath kindled in his face. 'What! rascals!' said he, the moment he recovered from the first paroxysm of wonder, 'are ye in a league to insult my ward;' at the same time, turning round the pictures to the view of the artists, who had both,

up to this moment, enjoyed the laughter and surprised looks of the party, because each of them thought these were directed at his rival's picture,—as was also most natural, since Alonso knew that he had made a caricature of Felipe's picture, and Felipe was as fully persuaded that he had made a caricature of Alonso's. But the satisfaction and glee of the painters were speedily changed to astonishment and dismay; their countenances being in fact, quite as diverting as their pictures. They looked at the portraits—then at the guardian—then at Violante—then at each other, and then at me. It was no difficult matter to read in my countenance, the pleasure I felt in having made them dupes; but to have upbraided me with the contrivance, would also have been, to proclaim their own knavery, and they therefore remained silent; exchanging only looks of mortification at each other, and darting ireful glances towards me :

but for my part, I already all but felt the four thousand crowns in my pocket; and I only returned provoking looks of satisfaction, as if I would have said, "poor devils! prettily duped are you."

All this takes some time to tell; but it was very short in the acting. At the first pause, Ramirez produced his picture, which represented his cousin at full length, with a white veil thrown over her head. "Sir," said I, addressing the old gentleman, 'I could easily unravel the history of these caricatures, but as it would reflect little honour upon the painters, they will prefer I have no doubt, that the mystery should remain unexplained; for they well know, that this lady will not give her hand to any one who has attempted to gain possession of it by dishonest means. As for the three pictures, there is no doubt to which of them the preference is due. This is not the portrait of Doña Violante, for

there is here but one eye—nor is that, for there the mouth is the mouth of one palsied,—but in this picture, what is there that does not belong to that lady? the form is her's, the air, the grace; and although the charms of her countenance be veiled, this is but typical of the bashfulness that is her distinction and her ornament: and moreover, what painter is there who could hope to portray the changing expression, the mantling blush, that might be expected in the countenance of a youthful bride at such a scene as this, and on her bridal morning? Ramirez has judged well, in veiling the charms of his cousin; for he has thus represented her mind as well as her form, and you perceive by the thick veil she now wears, how accurate has been his judgment, and consequently, how expressive his portrait."

"You are in the right," said the old man; "and if Violante confirm my opinion, let it be so determined:" and her guardian having put

the question to her, she replied, that having left the decision to him, she was ready to abide by his judgment. Upon this, the two dupes finding their hopes at an end, left the apartment; and Violante then throwing back her veil, allowed her guardian to place her hand in that of her cousin,—the charming blush, and averted looks, testifying how well satisfied she was with the issue of the competition; and I for my part, received a thousand thanks from her guardian, as well as from Ramirez, for my disinterested services. From Violante herself, I was repaid by a smile, that again sent to my heart a pang of deep regret that there were not three dupes in place of two. Alonso's and Felipe's heavy purses however, and still more, the four thousand crowns in prospect, were some consolation for the consequences of my disinterestedness in having served my friend. "I am yet but beginning the world," I said to myself; "I shall learn wisdom by and by."

## CHAPTER XI.

SHOWING THE CONNEXION BETWEEN DISAPPOINTED LOVE AND REVENGE; AND HOW VIOLANTE ACQUIRES ALL THE PRIVILEGES OF SENORA, WITHOUT LOSING THE ATTRACTIONS OF SENORITA.—I MAKE A NEW ACQUAINTANCE, AND AM ON THE EVE OF ENRICHING MYSELF FOR EVER.

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OWING to the successful issue of this affair, I began to look upon myself as a person of some capacity; and to conceive higher hopes of my advancement in the world. Not many days after the triumph of Ramirez, the nuptials were celebrated; and it had previously been arranged, that upon the same day, the bride's guardian and the two disappointed artists, should partake of a bridal feast at the house of the new-married

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couple. Ever since the decision which had crushed the hopes of Alonso and Felipe, they had appeared to take their disappointment in good part; they spoke of the affair jestingly, admitting that they had been outwitted; and they even went so far as to say, that they deserved their fate; while Violante, with her usual kindness of disposition, was charmed to think that in selecting one of the cousins for her husband, she might expect to retain the other two as friends. Ramirez was of a different opinion. "You do not know them," said he to Violante in my presence, the day before the bridal. "Depend upon it they will never forgive any of us; and that hatred and jealousy rankle in their minds. I would rather they were our avowed enemies, than our seeming friends; and who knows what means they may take to revenge themselves upon us."

"Oh, Juan," said Violante, "do not speak so

harshly of our cousins ; I trust they are deserving of our better opinions."

" Well, well, *mi querida*," replied Ramirez, " may you be in the right ! only this I know, that I would rather be where I am, than alone with them on the ramparts on a dark night."

The two unsuccessful artists were present at the bridal. That their countenances should have expressed the workings of jealousy and disappointment, could have surprised no one ; but I was at a loss to understand the expression of malicious triumph that shone through every other. When a few hours later, however, they entered the bridal house, this expression was no longer visible : in the countenances and manner of both of them, there was the utmost good humour and amenity ; but this change did not remove from my mind, the impression I had received from the conversation of Ramirez, strengthened as it had been, by the glances I had seen exchanged beside the altar.

It is a custom, peculiar I believe to Cadiz, that upon an occasion of this kind, each guest shows his good will by sending one dish to the feast—and that he who sends it, also presides over its distribution at table. This custom was not neglected at the bridal feast of Juan Ramirez and his cousin. Don Sancho (for such was the name of the guardian), presented a magnificent dish of quails—and Señor Alonso sent a tureen full of *sopa de tomates*—a dish, of which his cousin Violante never partook, from some natural dislike of the flavour of tomata. This, to say the least of it, was a strange choice upon his part, and to my mind, there appeared something suspicious in it.

The bride of course declined the soup, which led to a thousand apologies on the part of Alonso, for having forgotten that his cousin never ate of *sopa de tomates*. Ramirez was helped first, and it being my turn next, I cautiously sipped, until

I might ascertain by its effect upon Ramirez, whether my suspicion had any foundation. Scarcely had he swallowed three spoonsful, when I perceived a sudden and dreadful alteration in his countenance; my suspicions being thus confirmed, I sprung across the table, and seizing Alonso, and holding back his head (for I was greatly the stronger), I poured down his throat, notwithstanding his struggles, double the quantity of his own soup that Ramirez had swallowed; and at the same instant I perceived that both the one and the other lay senseless in their chairs. Meantime Señor Felipe had got his sword out of its scabbard, and it was within an inch of my throat before I knew of its existence; but being in these days inferior to few in activity, I sprung back, and was soon upon the defensive, and in another moment was the assailant; for not being without my suspicions, I had taken care to buckle on the good sabre of

Andrades, which I already knew how to wield with advantage. Never were tragedy and comedy more strangely blended, than in the scene now exhibited ; while the swords of Felipe and myself continued to clash, exclamations of “ my poor Juan,—oh, Dios ! oh, Dios ! ” were heard from Violante, as she bent over her husband ; the old guardian stood wringing his hands, now lifting them up,—now letting them fall,—and muttering lamentations, sometimes over Ramirez and his bride,—sometimes over the perils that were thickening around himself,—and sometimes, directed towards the overturned dishes ; the rich sauces, that were straying over the table, and the excellent quails that were rolling on the floor. Meanwhile, I was proving myself an overmatch for Felipe, who, beginning to perceive a probability that he also might speedily form part of the wreck of the feast, abandoned the field, and made his escape through the

window, and I was left in the banquet room with the widowed bride and her guardian, and the two poisoned gentlemen.

When I had leisure to breathe and look round me, I found the old guardian, Don Sancho, engaged in the laudable design of comforting his ward. "It might have been worse," said he, "the rascal meant to have poisoned us all; I might have been poisoned—you, if you had chanced to like *sopa de tomates*, might have been poisoned—the Caballero there, might have been poisoned: your husband may possibly revive; but if not, it is better that it should have happened now than at any other time; for you have obtained the rank of a married woman, without any of its drawbacks: believe me, my dear Violante, it is not every woman who obtains the title and privileges which marriage confers, without losing any of the attractions of a *señorita*.

But notwithstanding this consolatory language,

Violante continued to bewail her misfortune, and made no answer, save tears, to the well-meant, though as I confess it seemed to me, somewhat ill-timed discourse of her guardian. "Leave me to my grief," said she, as I approached; a request which I thought it most prudent to obey, for just then casting my eyes towards the window, which still remained open, I perceived Felipe, followed close at the heels by three or four officers of justice; and although conscious that I had done no more than rightfully reward Alonso for his villany, yet being sensible that I had taken the law into my own hands, and that Felipe could better afford to bribe justice than I could, and might therefore hang me if he had a mind, I resolved to make my exit by the door, and avoid all explanations. Leaving Violante, therefore, still inconsolable, and the two cousins—the poisoner and the poisoned, sitting stiff in their chairs, I made a hasty

retreat, reflecting with no small pleasure upon my good fortune, in having already received from my friend the handsome perquisite for which I had stipulated. The sum had been paid to me in five hundred pieces of eight,\* and these I had safely deposited in a leathern purse.

I made what haste I could to leave the city, and passing quickly along the ramparts and through the eastern gate, I found myself safe from present danger; and as I proceeded rapidly along the causeway that connects Cadiz with the main land, I could not forbear moralizing upon the events of which I had just been a witness,—the sudden reverse of fortune that had overtaken Ramirez, and the just punishment of the secret assassin; but I bitterly regretted that I had been concerned in them, not because I accused myself of a crime, but because if I had acted with greater prudence, I might have re-

\* A gold coin worth eight dollars.



mained to point out in due season, a remedy to the charming Violante for the loss of her husband; this it was that weighed upon my spirits, as I walked towards Isla.

I had not left Cadiz more than a league and a half behind, when I perceived on the road before me two persons, of whose business there, or condition in life, I could augur nothing from their dress and deportment. It was apparently an old man and a young woman—such as might be father and daughter. The tattered and patched crown cloak, ragged and shapeless hat, and almost shoeless feet of the former, would at once have proclaimed him a mendicant; while the respectable silk mantilla, and high comb, the fresh silk of the attire, the well-turned shoes, gloved hand, and graceful gait of the latter, rather indicated a person not greatly below the middle rank of life. As my step was quicker than theirs, I speedily came up with

them,—when both made a halt and turned round; but a closer view did not enable me to solve any better the enigma of this strange companionship. Their ages corresponded with the impression I had received in following them: the man might be fifty; the young woman certainly not twenty. In looking in his face, one might have said, sharp penury has worn him to the bone,—while the dark, roguish eyes, and pouting mouth of his companion, were full of health, smiles, and light-heartedness. When the old man first cast eyes upon me, he took off his hat, not as a salutation, but as a sign of alms-asking, at the same time beginning,—“For the love of God, sir,”—but the young girl immediately checked him by a surprised look, and a quick “*Padre*.”

“Young people, sir,” said he, addressing me with a new salutation, “expect impossibilities; but old habits are not easily laid aside. Mara-

quita is ashamed of me asking alms; but does not this cloak," exposing its ragged skirt, "proclaim my poverty even ——"

"Now, father, interrupted his daughter, did you not promise to me, that between Cadiz and Malaga ——"

"I did, I did, my child—pardon me;—as to that gentleman, he will scarcely believe you to be the daughter of a beggar by necessity; but habit, I say, is soon a tyrant;—is it not, sir?"

"It is, friend," said I; "but I almost think such a daughter as yours might prove an overmatch for it."

"Oh, sir," interrupted Maraquita, "I do not wish to dictate to my father,—only he promised that if I would be his companion in this journey (for he loves me tenderly), he would not affront me on the road; but when we arrive at Malaga, he is welcome to resume his profession if it give him pleasure."

“ Now, sir,” said the old man, “ that Maraquita has given you some notion of where the truth lies, we will not trespass upon your time ; you walk faster than we do,—and, besides, you would not like to be seen in the company of a man, who, whatever may be his real circumstances, at any rate looks like a beggar : so, good day,—and the Virgin go with you.” But I had no inclination to part company so soon : who could tell what might arise out of the acquaintance ? and, at all events, the road would seem shorter, when chatting with this sprightly little señorita. I therefore replied, that our way seemed to lie together ; and that, if it was not unpleasant to him and his daughter, I should be glad to make the journey in company, as far as our roads were the same. To this proposal, the old man, again saluting me with an obliging air, assured me that nothing could give him greater pleasure,—and Maraquita replied to the bow I

made her, with a courtesy and smile, and some quick flirtings of her fan.

In this manner we reached Isla; the old man insisted upon passing through it by the narrow street that leads by the back of the town, which, in my present circumstances, I was not sorry for; and soon after turning to the right, along the road that leads to Chiclana, my companion pointed to a house by the way side, which he said was the venta where he and his daughter proposed spending the night. "I am every where well known," said he; "you will not be worse accommodated because you arrive as my fellow-traveller." I at once assented to pass the night at the venta, and in another hour we were all three employed upon a respectable puchero,—and after making some inroads upon a skin of the best wine the house afforded, (which, in Andalusia, is the same as to say that the wine was excellent), my companion pro-

posed to retire to rest: "but to-morrow," said he, "if our way should still be together, I will relate to you a little history, for I doubt not you have some curiosity to know something more of those with whom you have condescended to join company."

Maraquita, at the conclusion of this speech, glanced on the small mirror which she carried along with her,\* as if she would have said, that there was no such extraordinary condescension in being the *galan* of so charming a señorita as herself,—and mutually saluting each other, we separated for the night.

Next morning, betimes, we were again on the road, with the expectation of reaching Chiclana by breakfast time, where our path would separate,—mine being towards Tarifa, with the in-

\* It is not unusual in Andalusia, for the ladies to carry a small mirror in travelling, such luxuries being unknown in the posadas and ventas.

tention of taking shipping from thence; and that of my companions' being, as I have already said, directed to Malaga. When we had proceeded a little way, talking of the pleasant morning, the fragrant shrubs that grew by the way-side, and of the attractions of Cadiz, that we had left, I reminded my companion of the kind promise he had made the night before. "My history will not occupy much time in telling," said he; "there is scarcely any one who knows it,—and if, at any future time, chance should bring us again together, I depend upon your keeping my secret, even if it be at the expense of dropping a quarto into the hat that you may then know might be filled with gold." I promised obedience to his request, and as we walked leisurely on, he spoke as follows:—

"I was the youngest of six children, all boys, and our original patrimony was small. My own was soon spent in dissipation; and as my parents

were then dead, and my brothers scattered over the world, I was thrown upon my own resources. My two elder brothers were killed in the wars; and the three others, who had each embraced the mercantile profession, established themselves in Bilbao, Barcellona, and Lisbon. When my own patrimony was wasted, I set out in quest of fortune, with little other principle than that which urged me to obtain a livelihood as I best could. Many and sore were the privations I suffered: hunger became as familiar to me as to the houseless dog; from one stratagem I was driven to another, to obtain bread; and at length I became a common beggar. This child was then, as she is at this moment, my companion; her mother, whom I married before poverty was even felt, died ere it overtook me; and many a *real* was given to the smiling face of the child, that was refused to the haggard looks of the father." Here the old man paused a



moment in his narrative, and, albeit we were on the highway, caught his daughter in his arms, and kissed her with the utmost fervour. "This life," continued he, "precarious as it was—disreputable, perhaps, as it is—had growing charms for me; if but my child had enough to eat, and I, wherewithal to satisfy the cravings of hunger, which you know, sir, in Andalusia, is not difficult to obtain, I was contented. In my early days my passion had been gambling; and the trade of the mendicant, when the first feelings of humiliation are overcome, has in it a certain excitement produced by its very precariousness, that in some degree assimilates it to the trade of the gambler.

"Having wandered all over Castile, as well as the southern parts of Spain, I passed into Biscay, and soon arrived at Bilbao. I was totally ignorant of the residence of any of my brethren; I knew, indeed, that one of them had been sent

to a mercantile house in that city, when not more than fourteen years old,—but where he had subsequently established himself, I had never learned. One day, soon after my arrival in Bilbao, I entered a shop, to buy, with one of the last two coins I possessed in the world, a little tobacco, which had often served me in place of bread; it was wrapped up in a scrap of printed paper,—and, casting my eyes over it accidentally, I was attracted by observing my own name: it was an advertisement, torn from the *Gaceta de Bayona*, addressed to the heirs of my brother, who had died a year before. You, who have probably never been placed in my circumstances (it was natural in the beggar so to presume, for, dressed as I was in the new and handsome suit purchased for Violante's bridal, I certainly did not look like one who had ever stood in need of a peseta), cannot enter into my feelings of that moment. I was, at all events,

entitled to some part of his inheritance; and I repaired, in my tattered garments, to the place to which applicants were addressed. They at first laughed at me, and then imprisoned me as an imposter; but at length they were induced to listen to me; and finally, I was admitted, after a long delay in obtaining evidence, to be the only heir of my brother—it having been ascertained that the other two had paid the debt of nature. I now found myself in possession of more than three millions of reals—a fortune that might enable me to live in affluence, even in the metropolis; and thither I accordingly repaired.

“ At first I lived, as my fortune entitled me to live. I hired a house in the Calle de Alcalá, the most distinguished street in Madrid: I partook unreservedly in all the amusements of the city; and, for a time, thought that I had reached the summit of all that man could desire; but habit was too strong—too confirmed to permit

a change in my mode of life: rich, surrounded by all the luxuries that are usually the aim of mankind, I yet sighed to be a beggar,—I was idle, and I longed for occupation. At length, after a succession of struggles, habit obtained the victory. I retired to an obscure part of the city, disguised myself in rags, and went about the streets asking charity. This is still my daily occupation,—it is a pleasure that I would not forego, for all the luxuries my wealth could purchase; and I have more satisfaction in counting over the few pesetas I gain in my daily peregrinations, than in looking at my securities for thousands. Six months in the year I live in Madrid; and the other six months, are spent making the tour of some part of Spain. This dutiful and loving child has no reason to complain of her father, mendicant though he be,—hast thou Maraquita?" an affectionate look con-

firmed the appeal, and the old man continued: "she is her own mistress; she has money at command; she dresses as she pleases; when I return from my rounds, I sometimes throw off my ragged apparel, and take her to the bull fight, or the Prado, where she enjoys herself like other young persons; and I, for my part, never grudge the sums expended upon her. Maraquita has had more than one good offer of marriage; but she prefers living with her old father, to marrying the gayest Caballero in all Spain,—dost thou not, Maraquita?" Another kind look answered this second appeal, and the old man then concluded his narrative in these words: "For my own part, I would gladly see Maraquita respectably settled before I die. I cannot now have many years to live, and she shall have half of my fortune upon her wedding day; and though I be her father, I cannot but

say, that whoever gets her, will have fallen upon his feet; for a better-hearted—ay, or better-looking girl does not exist in all Spain.”

When I found that my companion had made an end of his narrative, I expressed the strong interest it had excited in me; but it had sunk deeper into my mind than I cared at that moment to avow. This, of all the adventures that had taken place since leaving my native village, seemed the most likely to be turned to account. Half of this old man’s fortune was as good as a señorio; and as for Maraquita, though my acquaintance with Isabel, the Marquesa, and Violante, had rendered my taste in female beauty somewhat fastidious, she was a lively and good-looking damsel—fresh, young, and marvellously well made. She had not, indeed, the charming languor, and bewitching air of Isabel; nor the mature, and almost faultless beauty of the Marquesa; nor the simple, and seductive graces of

Violante; she was in fact nothing beyond *una muchacha bonita*; but such as she was, I resolved to forget the charms of all others for hers.

Most fortunately it so happened, that at the very same time that I had come to this determination, Maraquita had also seen cause to waver in the resolution for which her father had lately given her credit; and had in fact almost persuaded herself, that it was not impossible to marry, and yet to be a dutiful daughter. Accordingly, when, taking advantage of a siesta which the old man was enjoying, after we had partaken of a noon-day refreshment under a spreading cork tree, I seated myself beside Maraquita, and ventured to declare the passion with which she had inspired me, I found her not indisposed to listen; and when I told her I was in despair at the resolution which she had taken not to bestow her hand upon any suitor, she at first made no reply; but when I expostulated

upon the cruelty of such a resolution, and more warmly pleaded my own passion, she at length confessed, that if she was not forced to leave her father, she was not otherwise averse from matrimony; a confession which I found no difficulty in crediting. In short, we made good use of our time: before the old man's *siesta* was over, there was so little left to settle, that when he awoke, he found his daughter ready, if a priest had been present, to change the guardianship of a father for that of a husband.

When I had related to the father of my betrothed, as much of what had passed during the last half-hour, as was convenient, and had implored his blessing upon the engagements we had entered into, he offered no opposition. "Ah! señor," said he, "I might easily have guessed that Maraquita would not prove an exception to the rest of her sex—it was selfish in me to desire it: you appear to be a discreet



young gentleman; and since Maraquita has made her election, though it seems somewhat sudden, why should I stand in the way of it? God bless you both, my children: 't will indeed be a hard struggle to part from her; but—"

"We shall never part," said Maraquita, throwing her arms round her father's neck; "why should we part? The Caballero would not desire to part us."

I was about to confirm this appeal with all the willingness in the world, when the old man interrupted me. "There is time enough, my children," said he, "to settle all these things; let us at present hasten to reach Malaga, where the nuptials may take place." But as I was anxious to journey to Tarifa, rather than to Malaga; having resolved, the moment I obtained possession of my fortune, to retire for a time to the English settlement of Gibraltar in case of accidents, our route was changed for the

latter town, towards which we journeyed, in the greatest possible spirits,—Maraquita anticipating the honours and joys of matrimony, and I anticipating a successful conclusion to my search after fortune: on the afternoon of the next day, we approached Tarifa. Alas, who in such circumstances could have guessed the calamities that were brewing! But these must be the subject of a new chapter.

## CHAPTER XII.

BY WHICH IT WILL BE SEEN, HOW MUCH TRUTH THERE IS  
IN THE SAYING, THAT "THERE'S MANY A SLIP 'TWIXT  
THE CUP AND THE LIP."

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It so happened, that the captain of a trading vessel from the Levant, whose ship had come into port a few days before, had that morning received for his cargo the sum of four thousand crowns, which were paid him in five hundred pieces of eight, and which he put into a leathern purse by themselves, and taking horse, had set out that afternoon for Cadiz, in the intention of there spending his leisure time, and his spare crowns. Now as bad luck would have it, both

as it concerns the traveller and me, this worthy man had proceeded but a very little way out of Tarifa, when he was set upon by some villains, who no doubt had known of the prize; and who, after stripping him of his purse, and all his other valuables, tied him, and laid him among the bushes by the way-side; but he speedily contriving to unloose his bonds, made the best of his way back to Tarifa, and having obtained assistance, set out in search of the robbers.

The day having been extremely sultry, and being now the cool of the evening, Maraquita proposed that we should rest for a short space in a neighbouring thicket of algarrobos; probably that it might be dusk before we made our entry into Tarifa,—for with all her affection for her father, his patched cloak and ragged hat, as well as some dread of old habits, generally occasioned some little stratagem on her part, by which our appearance in the towns and villages

that lay in our way, might be delayed until night-fall.

Meantime, the unfortunate merchant who had been robbed, and his companions, were in full pursuit from Tarifa,—and with the impatience natural to a man who had been deprived of so considerable a sum, he had a long way headed his friends, and arrived opposite to the thicket, not long after we had seated ourselves in it,—and when the fine still evening, and the approaching termination of our journey, had begun to fill me with the gayest anticipations. The old man too, had just fallen into a doze,—and as I sat beside Maraquita, who had thrown aside her mantilla, and whose unloosened hair fell thickly over her neck and shoulders, I almost thought, that with even less than one-half of the old man's fortune, I might be persuaded to stand beside her at the altar. But this pleasant reverie was most disagreeably in-

terraptured. The anxious eye of the trading captain, rolling here and there, and piercing on every side, speedily discovered persons seated in the thicket,—and not doubting for a moment the merit of his discovery, he instantly advanced sword in hand, vociferating in the most furious manner, “Surrender yourselves, villains! produce the purse, I say, with the five hundred pieces of eight.”

Hearing mention made of a purse, and five hundred pieces of eight,—and knowing that I possessed such a purse, and seeing the determined air of the person who had advanced with a sword of formidable length, I could not doubt his intention of depriving me of my own,—but whether as a common robber who had somehow become informed of the state of my finances,—or as one who supposed himself to have some claim upon the *perquisite* I had received from my poor friend Ramirez, I could not tell. I de-

terminated, however, to resist the attempt; and perceiving that it was a matter of life and death, I quickly exchanged the hand of Maraquita which I held, for the hilt of my sword,—and started to my feet.

It seems to me, upon reflection, unaccountable, that the unfortunate man should not, in approaching me, have perceived that I was not the person who had robbed him; which I can only account for from his having thoroughly made up his mind upon the subject the moment he saw persons in the thicket,—the conviction assisted perhaps, by the deep shade of the trees,\* which spread a dim twilight within. There was no time for deliberation,—my assailant, I soon found to be no stranger to the use of his weapon; and although I at first acted entirely upon the defensive, yet the fierceness of my

\* The algarrobo, besides its utility, is one of the most beautiful of trees, full in its foliage, and rich in colour.

assailant, and his evident, and eager desire, to find the way to my vitals, naturally exasperated me; and thinking it no great matter after all, that so bloodthirsty and sordid a villain should meet with his deserts, I made a deadly thrust, and run him through the body. During the combat, the old man had stood as one stupefied, keeping aloof from the fray; while Maraquita had poured out loud lamentations, and attempted more than once to separate the combatants; and now that my assailant lay stone dead among the rosemary bushes, I was just beginning to explain to her how totally inexplicable was the whole affair, when the quick tread of footsteps was heard upon the road,—and in another moment, at least half-a-dozen persons were rushing towards the thicket. Seeing the affair begin to grow serious, I judged it best to put up my sword, and accept of an escort to Tarifa.



"The bloody-minded assassin," said one of the men, "not contented with having robbed the poor merchant, he has killed him because he tried to get back his own."

"The monster!" said another.

"Barbaro!" said they all.

"Gentlemen," said I, "there is some mistake here."

"Mistake, indeed!" said one.

"Is n't he there, dead?" said another.

"Have you not the bloody sword in your hand?" said a third.

"Ay, and the poor man's purse and his gold in your pocket, no doubt," said a fourth.

"That I killed him, is true," I replied; "but he tried to rob me, and would have killed *me*."

"Rob you, indeed,—rob you of his own!" said one.

"Pity but he had killed you," said another.

"Off with him," said they all; "'t is better he has had time to confess."

During this parley, Maraquita had several times tried to make herself heard: "he is no robber," she vociferated; "he is all but my husband."

"Joy of your choice, señorita," said they;—and I soon found myself on the road to Tarifa with my hands tied,—the dead merchant carried behind me,—and the old man and Maraquita also prisoners by my side.

As we entered Tarifa (under somewhat different circumstances from those pictured to our minds an hour before), the people crowded around us,—the dead man at once testifying that I was an assassin; but for the imprecations that were vented against me, I was somewhat consoled by the expressions of regret, that so comely a youth should be so near the gallows. Maraquita's smiles were all turned to tears; but I told her she had no cause to weep, or be sorrowful, because the whole affair was a mistake; and that so soon as we should be examined

by the alcalde, we should be set at liberty : and in this belief, I found myself standing in the magistrate's presence.

The robbery of the captain-trader was already well known throughout Tarifa, and especially to the administrators of justice; so that the alcalde at once comprehended who it was they had brought before him: it was only necessary to explain farther, that this robber was also a murderer. "We found the poor man dead at his feet," said they; "and the sword in his hand, covered with blood,—the murdered man lies in the ante-room, run through and through."

I begged to be heard,—and then stated the facts precisely as they had happened; admitting that I had killed the man, to prevent him killing me, and taking my property,—and calling upon Maraquita and her father to corroborate my statement.

"This is all very well," said the alcalde, "a guilty man must say something for himself

—but the affair may be cut short in a moment ; no doubt he is in possession of the purse of the unfortunate man he first robbed, and then murdered,—search him,—if it be found either upon him or his accomplices, there is evidence enough to hang a score.”

I told the magistrate I would save the trouble of a search,—at the same time throwing upon the table, the leathern purse containing my five hundred pieces of eight, which I averred to be my own.

“The case is clear,” said the alcalde ; “but empty the purse, and count the money.”

This was immediately done, and it was found to contain precisely five hundred pieces of eight.

“Hardened wretch !” said the alcalde, “I might now send you to prison ; but that your guilt may be made still more manifest, and that not a shadow of doubt may remain, I have sent for one who is able to certify that this is the

purse of the murdered man." And it was now for the first time when this witness spoke, that I comprehended the danger of the situation in which I stood; and that I learned how that the unfortunate man who had come by his death in the manner above related, had been robbed of five hundred pieces of eight contained in a leathern purse.

"Is it probable," said I, "that if this robbery had been committed by me, I would have remained almost upon the spot, fooling away the precious time that might have carried me from pursuit."

"Is it likely," asked the alcalde, in return, "that two men should at the same time and in the neighbourhood of Tarifa, have possessed leathern purses, each containing precisely five hundred pieces of eight?—and besides, there would be sufficient evidence against you, even if no purse had been found; for this unfortunate

man would never have attempted to regain his property by attacking a man whom he had not the very best reason to believe to be the thief."

"If the murdered man could speak," said I, "he would testify, that the purse which lies there, is not his purse."

"If you have none but dead men for witnesses," said the alcalde, "I suspect you will soon have an opportunity of chiding them for their indifference; but men don't receive purses with five hundred pieces of eight in them every day: perhaps he from whom you received yours, and who might have helped you out of your difficulty, is also dead."

And such was indeed the truth—Ramirez was in no condition to assist me. "Such," replied I, "is the fact, strange as it may appear; he from whom I received this purse, is indeed no more."

"Murdered too, perhaps," said the magistrate. "Away with him; away with him to prison."

While this examination was going on, Maraquita and her father, who were also prisoners, stood by. The latter, who no doubt began by this time to dislike the connexion, assured the alcalde, that his acquaintance with me was entirely accidental, and begged that it might now be allowed to terminate; but Maraquita, whose mind had been occupied with the contemplation of the beginning, rather than the end, of a connexion, expostulated with the magistrate upon the injustice of his conclusions; warmly asserted my innocence; and declared, that if I must go to prison, she would follow me thither. But to this, neither the alcalde nor the father of my betrothed would consent by any means, and I was accordingly marched off to confinement, without learning whether my companions were released or not. As I was leaving the court, an escrivano whispered in my ear, that for a thousand reals, he would save me from being hanged; but I was not

rich enough to bribe the rogue.\* In this manner did I lose the handsome perquisite which my address in securing the prize for Ramirez had gained for me, as well as the golden prospect that was opening before me. But to all appearance, these misfortunes were not worth naming, in comparison with the greater calamity that awaited me; for how could I hope that my story unsupported by witnesses, except by those who were looked upon as my accomplices, could gain credence against the chain of circumstances that seemed to bring the crimes home to me. Occupied with the most gloomy anticipations, I remained in prison until

\* Nothing is so difficult as to bring a man to trial, who has any thing in his purse,—except to bring him to execution; for money will always buy indemnity. Every thing in Spain connected with the following out of the laws, is in the hands of the *escrivanos*; these are the friends of all bad men: for whatever be the action a man may commit, or meditate, he has only to confide in the *escrivano*, and pay for his protection.—*Spain in 1830.*



the next day, when I was carried before the tribunal whose business it was to judge finally of my case. Here, as I had anticipated, I found my story of no avail against the testimony of the man who had paid the murdered trader five hundred pieces of eight, and had seen him put them into a leathern purse,—corroborated as this was by the facts, that he had singled out me as the robber, and had come to his death by my hand,—and I was accordingly sentenced to solitary imprisonment for life; a punishment, that, if the object of law be vengeance, has more to recommend it than death itself.

The unfortunate persons whose crimes have subjected them to this dreadful punishment, in any of the southern parts of Spain, are most generally sent to Tarifa.\* Along both sides of the port, there is a mole nearly half a mile in

\* A town in the straits of Gibraltar, the most southern point of the continent of Europe.

length; at the extremity of which on either side, and at the entrance of the harbour, stands a huge and ancient moorish tower, about a hundred and sixty feet in height above the sea. In this tower, which contains six chambers, one above another, prisoners for life are confined; and thither I was accordingly conveyed. It is the policy of the Spanish laws, to render the punishment of criminals subservient to public utility; and this is in some degree effected even by solitary confinement. The prisoners confined in these towers are employed in turns, night by night, in trimming the lamps—which are a beacon to the vessels at sea. From each chamber, there is a separate ascent to the summit of the tower; so that the prisoners never see each other, and each in his turn is obliged to remain from night until day-break upon the summit,—part of his punishment for the destruction of human life, being thus made subservient to its preservation.

From these towers there are no visible means of escape: in the chambers, the windows are merely circular holes in walls at least six feet in thickness; and the outside walls being entirely smooth, there are no means of descent from the summit unless by a fearful leap of a hundred and sixty feet into the sea; for on the side towards the town, a wall of twenty feet high shuts out the prospect of land; serving at the same time as a hindrance to any communication, and as an aggravation of punishment, by shutting out from the eye of the prisoner, the cheerful lights of human habitations, or perhaps even, it might be, the dim view of human forms. It only requires to be added to this description, that a ponderous iron chain stretches from one tower to the other, across the mouth of the port, depending from fastenings situated about two feet below the summit of each, but forming a curve by its own weight; and in the centre, reaching to within

twenty or thirty feet of the surface of the water, from which point, other chains are attached, reaching horizontally to the towers on either side. It is needless to say, that during the day this great chain is lowered into the water when vessels desire to enter; but at night, it is again raised; and there being rumours of war at this period, no ships were admitted during the night,—the chain being a security against an enemy entering, and cutting out vessels under favour of the darkness.

I will not attempt a description of my feelings when left alone in the small stone chamber, from which a speck only of the blue sky was visible through the little aperture, and where not a murmur of human life could penetrate the massive walls. “Here,” said I to myself, “I must remain for ever;”—the thought was enough to turn the merriest mind to sadness. I was not apt to be cast down with trifles; but turn the

thing which way I would in my mind, I could neither reconcile myself to my misfortune, nor perceive any obvious deliverance from it : yet, I could not thoroughly persuade myself, that there was for ever an end of scheming ; and that I must live and die in the tower at the entrance to the port of Tarifa.

When it came to my turn to watch on the summit, of which the only intimation was, the opening of the door by invisible hands, I felt the full luxury of the change. In the winter season it might be indeed a comfortless post ; but as yet, the open air was milder than that in the chambers below. When I reached the summit, it was deep twilight ; the lamps were already lighted,—and it was my business to watch, and trim them. The sea, and the opposite tower were alone visible ; but the prospect, gloomy as it was, I felt to be life, compared with the limited horizon of the chamber below. At first, some

vessels were dimly seen through the dusk, at anchorage off the port; but the scene was soon wrapt in darkness: it was a moonless night, and nothing was visible but the lights on the opposite tower, and occasionally the gleam of a wave, as its white crest was touched with the reflection of the watch lights.

This, thought I in my own mind, as I leaned upon the wall, is a pretty way of spending the night, for a man who knows how to turn darkness as well as light to account; and I bethought me of all the pleasures of Cadiz, which I had enjoyed with my unlucky preceptor who was hanged; as well as when in the service of the Marquesa, who poisoned herself; and of the charming suppers of which I had partaken with Violante and her guardian, and Ramirez, whose unfortunate exit was more than all to be regretted; since, had he been allowed to live, I might never have been perched upon a watch

tower from night till morning : and this brought Maraquita to my recollection,—why, this very night might have been my wedding night !!!

When one object only is visible, the eyes naturally wander towards it ; I accordingly often found myself looking vaguely at the opposite tower ; but my attention was arrested by perceiving a dark shadow at times pass to and fro, among the lights. I might have easily guessed indeed, that I had a fellow-labourer ; but still, this seemed a discovery, and an agreeable one, because it diminished the feeling of loneliness. I now kept my eyes intently fixed upon the lights ; and as again the form was more revealed by the full blaze of the lamps, it suddenly occurred to me, that I might use the telescope which stood by me (probably for the use of the day watch), as a means of making me better acquainted with the figure at least, of my unfortunate fellow-sufferer. I accordingly, with some

difficulty directed it towards the opposite tower; it was a glass of the finest construction, and as the distance was but inconsiderable, I found it completely answer my expectations. I could at once perceive, that my fellow-labourer was a female; the form indeed, much shrouded by the habiliments suited to the performance of such a duty—but still, sufficiently revealed to leave no doubt upon this score. The head and face were hidden in the hands, and supported by the elbows resting on the knee; so that at first, the features of the countenance were unseen; but judge of my astonishment, when upon raising her head, the blaze of light fell upon, and revealed the well-known features of Isabel. Never before were surprise, pleasure, and pain so strangely mingled—but the last predominated. I had never altogether forgotten Isabel,—and with this discovery, I felt for the first time a sting of reproach, since doubtless my desertion of her had led to her



apprehension, and to her punishment as the supposed murderer of her husband Andrades. I looked long and earnestly,—it was indeed Isabel—greatly altered; but still to be recognized as her who reclined upon the sofa in Don José's saloon, and who rode by my side from Seville, and whose head lay upon my shoulder as we journeyed to Xeres. Alas, poor Isabel! I might well say, to be thus employed. I would have given worlds to speak to her, and hear from her the history of her misfortune;—but this was impossible—and I was forced to be contented during the remainder of the night, with keeping my eye at the telescope, and watching her movements. At times, I almost felt, that I would have risked my life for her deliverance; but how alas, could I scheme the deliverance of another, when my own seemed hopeless! The day had scarcely begun to break, when the door by which I reached the summit of the tower fell

back,—announcing to me that the time had arrived, when I must betake myself to my chamber.

The next night upon which it was again my turn to watch the lights, I mounted to the summit with alacrity; and scarcely had I reached it when I eagerly turned the telescope towards the opposite tower—but alas! how great was my disappointment to find, that this night my fellow-sufferer was not Isabel. This was easily enough explained, on the supposition that each of the towers had not the same number of inmates; and it was therefore impossible for me to discover when the turn of Isabel might next chance to be upon the same night as my own. This night, I was thus forced to spend in melancholy reflection, and in listening to the waves breaking upon the mole. Another night returned, and brought with it another disappointment; but upon the fourth, no sooner had I applied my eye to the

telescope, than it rested upon the form of Isabel. I watched her movements—her countenance,—and she seemed so near to me, that when I whispered,—“ Ah ! my poor Isabel,” I fancied she could hear me pity her ;—but when I withdrew my eye from the glass, this delusion fled, for I saw the dark gulf that yawned between the towers. When, after a few moments, I again applied my eye to the telescope, I was not at first able to perceive any one,—but upon a more attentive scrutiny, I discovered that Isabel was employed in the same manner, and had turned her telescope towards my tower, and was kneeling behind it. I immediately discontinued my scrutiny, and placed myself in the full blaze of the lights,—making at the same time, signals of recognition ; and when, after a little interval, I again sought Isabel, I had the satisfaction of seeing her instantly return the signals.

It would have been no difficult matter for the

human voice to be heard from tower to tower on a still night; a slight elevation of tone would have been sufficient for this; for the distance could not greatly have exceeded three hundred yards; but the same sounds that would have reached the opposite tower, must also have been heard within the port, and even on the mole. This sort of communication was, therefore, out of the question; but anxious as I was to attain the object in some way, I still continued to ruminate upon the possibility of effecting it.

While leaning over the tower, my eyes rested upon the iron chain, dimly seen suspended from tower to tower; and I almost instantly began to consider the possibility of attempting by its means to pass the gulf, and thus reach the opposite tower. My arms were sinewy,—my strength and agility great,—and courage, I had never yet found wanting.

Scarcely was the scheme suggested to the

mind, before it was resolved upon; and it was no sooner resolved upon, than adopted. As I raised myself upon the wall, and the next instant dropped upon the chain, I distinctly heard from the opposite tower a faint cry, which I made no doubt was the expression of Isabel's fears, as she watched my motions.

And now I was suspended over the gulf,—pitchy darkness around,—and the black sea beneath; but I felt my arms strong, and my grasp secure, and I worked my way rapidly forward. At first, my progress was speedy and easy, for I was descending the curve, and soon reached the lower point of it, and was enabled where the smaller chains were attached to rest awhile,—standing upon one of these, and leaning upon the great chain. Here, I seemed to be within but a short distance of the water, whose surface gleamed faintly and tremblingly beneath: I could have dropped into it without

danger, but to what purpose? I now began to enter upon the more difficult and perilous part of my task,—ascending the chain to the opposite tower; and as I found the labour of this attempt every moment increase, I could not help feeling, that I was guilty of an act of folly, in risking life to reach one from whom I had once before voluntarily separated myself: but there was now no room for repentance; and besides, I could not but feel some interest in her who I had every reason to believe had been brought into misfortune by me; and if this conjecture should prove correct, my doom would be rendered no worse, by declaring myself the murderer, or at least the slayer of Andrades, as my punishment was already fixed,—and thus Isabel might be restored to liberty.

Occupied with such thoughts, I at length reached the top of the chain; and in another moment had sprung upon the summit of the

tower, and stood beside the long-lost, the unfortunate,—the altered, but still lovely,—and as it appeared, the yet affectionate Isabel. “Ah! barbaro,” said she, as I clasped her in my arms: but notwithstanding this salutation, I could perceive that ill-treatment had noways diminished her predilection for me (an enigma by the by, in the character of a woman); and as her tears fell abundantly upon my cheek, I could not do less than accuse myself, in terms of the bitterest self-reproach, for my cruelty in having ever abandoned so charming a creature.

“Alas!” said she, “what has brought this misfortune upon you? Has the death of that monster Andrades brought *you* hither also?”

“It is then,” said I, “as I suspected, that act of justice is the origin of your calamity: mine has not arisen from the same source—but from a cause for which I as innocently suffer.” And I then briefly narrated to Isabel my adven-

tures since parting from her, and particularly, the circumstances that had led to my imprisonment; taking care, however, to avoid all mention of my late engagements with Maraquita; and concluding by solemnly repeating, that when I deserted her near Xeres, it was solely from the desire of saving her from those misfortunes which I foresaw would reach her; if she had joined her lot with mine. “And now,” said I, “indulge me with the narrative of your misfortunes!” Seating ourselves therefore on the stone, underneath the wall, and throwing around her the cloak which was wide enough for us both, she gave me the following brief narrative of the events subsequent to our parting on the road to Xeres.



## CHAPTER XIII.

CONTAINING THE SEQUEL OF ISABEL'S STORY,—AND SHOW-  
ING THE GREAT ADVANTAGE OF A BAD REPUTATION,—  
INASMUCH AS HAD I NOT BEEN TAKEN FOR THE DEVIL,  
I MIGHT HAVE REMAINED UNTIL THIS DAY IN THE  
TOWER OF TAKIFA.

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“ALAS!” said Isabel, “when I recall to my memory, the moment when I first discovered that I was abandoned by you, my tears ever flow as abundantly as they did then. The last moment I am able to recollect, previous to that dreadful discovery was, when between sleeping and waking, I dropped my head upon your breast: how long after this it might have been when I awoke, I cannot tell; my head lay back in the chariot, which was moving rapidly,—and

for some time I did not know that I was alone. I thought you were asleep, and I was unwilling to break your slumber; but at length I spoke,—and hearing no answer, I listened more attentively,—and was soon convinced I was alone. The moment the dreadful suspicion that I was deserted flashed upon my mind, I became almost frantic; and when, after much difficulty, I succeeded in making the muleteer hear my cries, and when from him my worst suspicions were confirmed, I immediately swooned away. It was doubtless some consolation when I recovered, to learn, that although abandoned by you, my welfare had not been altogether forgotten by you; and that I was about to be restored to my friends; yet, to my shame, perhaps, I confess, that my heart was occupied with your image, almost to the exclusion of my kindred.

“It was on the evening of the fourth day, when I alighted at my father’s gate,—but, in

place of being welcomed by kind looks and happy faces, the countenances of all bespoke doubt and fear, and I had scarcely entered the house, when I was told that the whole affair was well known :—that I, in conjunction with a gallant, had murdered my husband, and had then fled, in company with my accomplice. ‘ I scarcely know,’ said my father, ‘ whether I dare give you shelter,—for it is not many days since the officers of justice were here in search of you, and there is little doubt but that a second visit may be expected, so soon as it is whispered that you have returned; and who,’ continued he, ‘ is this gallant who has led you to forget your duty to God and to your husband?’ and, then wiping away the tears which my father’s insinuation had called into my eyes, I gave him an exact detail of every thing that had happened —of the cruelties of the monster Andrades, and of the manner in which you delivered me from

them—and how we afterwards fled—and how you cruelly deserted me; and when I had finished my relation, he complimented you upon your valour in having so adroitly rid the world of Andrades—called me indiscreet in running away with you—and highly extolled your conduct in sending me back. ‘For a while,’ said he, ‘you shall be kept concealed, until the thing be forgotten; you know that you were betrothed to another at the time Don José forced you to the altar,—and I see no reason why you should remain a widow longer than inclination prompts you;’ but I vowed, in my own mind, that after having been deserted by you, nothing should tempt me to become the wife of another; but that I would rather become an inmate of the convent of Santa Monica.

“For more than a month I remained true to this resolution; but at length, the importunities of him to whom I had been first betrothed, pre-

ailed. Do not imagine, that in going to the altar with another, I had forgotten you; but you must allow that there was something equivocal in my situation; and this—marriage alone could remove: and, besides, there was no reason to hope that I should ever cast my eyes upon you again; for I had little doubt but that you would think it safest to leave Spain, which I only wish the good God had put into your head;—although it would have been the cause of depriving me of this interview.

“ We now began to think that Andrades had been forgotten, as he deserved to be; and that the notoriety of my nuptials would scarcely revive the story. But alas! in this hope we were cruelly deceived. The priest—the same who had advised me to marry Andrades, and to whom the death of that odious monster proved a deprivation of many advantages, present and prospective, determined to avenge the death of his

patron, from whose heir he could expect no favour, as he had made himself obnoxious to him during Andrade's life, by many acts of tyranny. Accordingly, I had been a wife only one week, when, in the middle of the night, I was torn from the arms of my husband, and carried to Seville. I did not greatly love my husband, for your image was still uppermost in my mind; but he was kind, and passionately fond of me; and when I tell you that he first made an impression upon my heart before I was fifteen, I need scarcely say, that in personal appearance he was more the opposite of Andrades, than any one I have ever seen excepting yourself.

“ I now approach the conclusion of my narrative. I was found guilty of assisting to murder my husband, and condemned to solitary imprisonment for life, in the tower of Tarifa. Here I have been confined for more than a year; but

in place of becoming accustomed to solitude, and reconciled to it, my doom becomes every day more intolerable. Many times I have been on the point of throwing myself into the sea,—but my womanish fears have always proved stronger than my wretchedness: it would be a fearful leap; yet I believe I may some time find courage,—and I hardly think God will punish me for delivering myself from a state of misery that can end only with life. And yet, even this place might be endurable, if you were to remain with me,—surely you will not leave me, to cross that frightful gulf to-night.”—And as Isabel thus finished her narrative, and pressed closer to me, I felt, that, although far from agreeable to sojourn in such a place, even with Isabel, this would yet be greatly preferable to solitude. But to such a project, many serious difficulties presented themselves: I represented to Isabel, that if I did not reach the opposite tower that night,

it would be discovered, when the food put into my cell remained untasted, that I was gone; and as the conclusion would necessarily be, that I had leaped into the sea, no more food would be put into my cell, and consequently, when I did return, I should die of hunger. "But," said Isabel, "why return ever? Providence seems to delight in throwing us together,—and if, as unhappily seems too true, the doom of both of us be to live and die in these towers, why should we not——"

"Live and die together, you would say;" and, in truth, there was reason in this proposal of Isabel. "Why, indeed, should we not?" said I; but in yielding so readily to this suggestion, I looked farther than Isabel did. Isabel had doubtless many charms,—and here, I should at least have nothing to fear from rivals; but that which weighed with me fully as much as the prospect of a honey-moon, was this,—that a



man who is supposed to be dead, has greater facilities of escape,—and so, without at that time saying any thing upon this subject to Isabel, I acquiesced in the proposal of changing my quarters, and being her guest for the present. An affectionate squeeze of the hand was the prompt reward of my compliance; and the remainder of the night, which was calm and balmy, was spent as much to our mutual satisfaction as was compatible with the circumstances in which our re-union took place.

“There cannot be a doubt,” said Isabel, “that the Pope has long ago been applied to by my husband to dissolve our marriage.”

“And that his holiness has granted the petition, too,” said I. “And although ours be a new case, as it probably never happened before that the idea of marrying was entertained by persons in solitary imprisonment,—yet as there is here neither church nor priest, Heaven will,

without doubt, accept our vows, and bless us:" and thus did I become all but the husband of Isabel.

Several days elapsed before it was again the turn of Isabel to watch on the summit; meantime the food that was intended for one, was made to suffice for two; we conversed in whispers, lest my embryo plan of escape should be frustrated by a premature discovery of my dwelling place; and even if I had looked to no ulterior advantages, from my change of quarters, the society of Isabel would have been a sufficient reward for the peril of my journey. But I had now concocted in my mind, a plan of escape, which I hastened to put in execution, after having first communicated it to Isabel, whose co-operation was necessary to ensure its success.

It may have been already gathered, that the characteristic of the punishment of solitary con-

finement in the towers of Tarifa, consisted in the rigidity with which it was enforced: once admitted there, and no human eye ever more rested upon the living form of the prisoner. The food necessary for the preservation of life, and therefore, for the continuance of punishment, was placed, and removed, by unseen hands; nor was the sound of a human voice ever heard within these stone chambers. But to this, one exception was provided: although it was the policy of the law, to punish the living culprit thus severely, the church did not resign her claims to the care of his soul; once accordingly, in every month, a holy tread was heard along the secret passages, and an iron screen being thrown back, the confessor, a Franciscan friar, took his seat at a thick grating; behind which nothing could be seen, though the confession of the prisoner might pass to the ear of the holy man, and his counsel in return reach

the ear, or it might be, the heart, of the solitary criminal. The door by which the prisoner first entered was never unbarred, until the hour when his coffin was carried in and out.

The day now approached, when the visit of the confessor might be expected, and I laid my plans accordingly, and executed them in the following manner:—

“Isabel,” said I, as the slow tread announced the approach of the confessor, “you must feign to be dead; spread the pallet opposite to the grating, and lay yourself upon it.”

I found some difficulty in prevailing upon Isabel to mock the king of terrors; but, at length, I succeeded in persuading her,—by representing that it was easier to counterfeit death than to meet it; and that to do the one, afforded the only chance of avoiding the other; and scarcely was Isabel extended upon the floor, when the screen was heard to open upon its

harsh hinges, and the confessor to say, "erring daughter, approach."

"Father," said I, in a low sepulchral tone, at the same time advancing noiselessly towards the grating.

"Holy St. Francis," said the confessor, in a voice of terror, and making at the same time a retrograde movement from the grating, "'t is a man !"

"Father," said I, in the same unearthly tone, "fear nothing, it is no man that addresses thee ; well thou knowest that no fleshly form can gain entrance here ; it is not a man, but a spirit, with whom thou art communing." As I spoke thus, I could hear the Friar rapidly commending himself to the protection of the Holy Mother of God, and of all the Saints ; and I continued, "She whom thou camest to confess, is now beyond the reach of thy counsel : her soul has gone to its heavy account, and her body lieth

there;" said I, gliding aside, and knowing well, that although nothing could be seen from the cell through the grating, yet all within was visible from the other side. "I am the ghost of the murdered José Andrades;" and at the same time that I made this announcement, I threw back a part of the hood that covered my face, and the dim light from the circular hole falling upon the upper part of the countenance, showed a visage which fasting and confinement had already made more like the face of a dead than of a living man, and which I had taken care to besmear with blood.

A new exclamation of horror, and still more rapid prayers, followed this revelation.

"Here," continued I, again drawing the hood over my face, and approaching the grate—from which I could hear the Friar retreating; "here will I remain, in dread communion with the body of my murderer, until it be taken

hence: delay not to let this be done, else I will speak with thee nearer anon."

The Friar being already as near to the ghost of a murdered man as he probably desired to be, and willing to prevent the execution of this threat of a nearer colloquy, swung the screen forward, which closed with a tremendous clank, and the rapid footsteps of the terrified confessor speedily died away.

"Ah, Dios!" said Isabel, "I had scarcely courage to go through my part: when you spoke of my soul having gone to its account, I was on the point of rising, to convince myself that I was yet living."

"Surely," returned I, "you may find courage to personate a dead woman, when I have no hesitation in personating the ghost of a murdered man; the stratagem succeeds; you will have but once more to play your part; and I am much mistaken if we be not both outside

of this tower before another day shall pass over our heads;" and animated by this hope, Isabel promised to obey my directions.

Now, it will easily be believed, that the confessor, upon leaving the tower, would immediately communicate to the civil and spiritual authorities, the particulars of the extraordinary interview that had taken place; and that although doubts might at first be entertained of the sanity of the narrator, yet, that his positive asseverations would at length so far weigh with the alcalde, and the bishop of Ronda, who then chanced to be making his yearly visitation to Tarifa, as to induce them to judge with their own eyes, of the truth of what had been told to them. I was prepared for this; and when in less than three hours, the iron screen was heard to fall back, Isabel was again stretched upon the ground, while I stood motionless by her side. Who were the persons that peered



through the grate, I am unable to tell, but whoever they might be, they were quickly satisfied with their scrutiny; for when I glided towards the grate, at the same time allowing the hood to fall partially back, the screen was suddenly closed, and quick retiring footsteps announced the further success of the stratagem.

However extraordinary the thing might seem, and however hard of belief, no doubt could any longer rest upon the minds of those whom first duty, and then incredulity, had led to the tower, that something supernatural inhabited the chamber where lay the dead Isabel. Her, they had seen extended on the floor; and they had seen another being, which could not be a mortal, because well they were convinced no mortal could gain entrance there. That it was the ghost of him who had been murdered by the inmate of the cell, no one could doubt; and the sooner therefore the body of the wretched

prisoner could be carried out, the sooner would this spirit cease to haunt the tower of Tarifa. It was in this manner therefore, that the affair was argued by the confessor, the bishop, and the alcalde, among whom the following colloquy took place.

“I suppose, gentlemen,” said the confessor, “you are now sufficiently convinced that I have told you no tale.”

“Sufficiently convinced,” said the alcalde ; yet breathless with fear.

“There is no doubt of it,” said the bishop ; panting from the rapidity of his descent from the tower.

“Why,” rejoined the confessor, “I was as near to it as I am to you !” shuffling up close to the alcalde’s nose.

“Ah, Dios !” said the alcalde, drawing involuntarily back.

“Tis certainly,” said the bishop, “a stain

upon the sanctity of this catholic town, that a thing of this kind should have taken place; the quieter the affair is kept, the better; no doubt, señor alcalde, a coffin can be prepared to-night, to carry away the body; those who carry it, must know nothing of what we have seen; and you, as chief magistrate, will superintend the removal."

"Truly," said the alcalde, "'t is a duty I would rather avoid: I am a poor sinful man, ill fitted to grapple with the powers of darkness; whereas holy men, like my lord bishop and the good friar, can have nothing to fear."

"I fear nothing," said the confessor.

"Oh, we fear nothing," said the bishop; "and it does seem to me, that the reverend father cannot well be excused taking a part in this duty, as he is in some sort under an engagement to the evil spirit (crossing himself) to see it executed."

“But,” rejoined the friar, “would it not be felt by us all to be a great security, were we in this emergency to make use of the relics which are deposited in the church of San Salvador,—and which no one, save the bishop, is worthy to handle?”

“’T is an excellent suggestion,” said the alcalde.

Now the bishop, desirous no doubt of paying a compliment to the alcalde and the friar by intrusting these sacred relics to their care, in place of taking upon himself the honourable office of being their bearer, said:—“The relics are indeed efficacious in cases of this nature; and while handling them, the greatest sinner upon earth has nothing to fear from an interview with any spirit. I possess the power of delegating to whom I will, the high honour of bearing these relics,—and into your hands, gentlemen, I will jointly commit them; and while

you are engaged in the performance of your duty, I will invoke for you the protection of our tutelary saint."

Such, I say, was the colloquy that took place between the bishop, the alcalde, and the friar,—and when this proposal was made by the bishop, there can be no question that the fears of the alcalde were greatly allayed; and that the qualms even of the friar were in some degree quieted—so great was the confidence placed in the virtues of the relics.

Meanwhile, the hours passed away, and night came. I entertained little doubt, that this very night the coffin would be sent for Isabel; trusting to the efficacy of the threat held out to the confessor; and I prepared accordingly. "You will have nothing to do, Isabel," said I, "but to follow close at my heels." In thus providing for the escape of Isabel, I confess it was chiefly a regard for my own safety that prompted me to

this. A sojourn of between one and two weeks in the tower, upon half the miserable pittance of a prisoner, had greatly cooled the fever of my love; and I foresaw that a companion would, in no small degree, interfere with my projects of independence, and might even perhaps lessen the chances of my ultimate escape,—but then, if Isabel were left behind, or could be prevailed upon to allow herself to be put into her coffin, it was too much to expect of her, that she would permit it to be consigned to the earth without giving some audible demonstration of being alive; and if one part of the trick were detected, threats or punishment would soon discover all the other parts of it; and my recapture would no doubt be the consequence. Besides—for why should I conceal the virtuous movements of my mind—I felt a repugnance in leaving Isabel to perpetual imprisonment, or to the chance of being buried alive; but feeling at the same time, that if suc-

cessful in delivering her from confinement, I should in that case have sufficiently acquitted myself of obligations, and satisfied my scruples, I resolved that upon the first favourable opportunity I would dispose of Isabel, and recover my independence.

And now, the crisis was at hand. Slow, heavy steps, as of persons carrying a burden, were heard approaching : other, and more hesitating steps, mingled with these. At length they reached the massive iron door, and the burden was put down. The thickness of the door was too great, to permit the words spoken without to be heard within ; but for some time the monotonous sound of a voice continued—doubtless, a prayer of length and efficacy by the Franciscan. The voice ceased ; the chains and bolts were one by one withdrawn ; the door slowly swung back, and a glare of flambeaux flashed into the cell. Isabel lay on the pallet,

while I stood motionless in the middle of the floor—my face turned towards the door, and my hood partly thrown back. No sooner did the light reveal my figure, than the coffin-bearers, uttering an affrighted scream, made but one step from the top to the bottom of the stair-case: for a moment the alcalde and the friar, who partly expected what they saw, and who partly trusted to the protection of the relics which they held in their hands, stood their ground; crossing themselves with great rapidity, and muttering prayers the while; but upon the first movement I made towards them, they followed the coffin-bearers with so much precipitancy, that in their eagerness which should be the first, both rolled down the stairs, and the flambeaux falling from their trembling hands, were extinguished.

“Now is the time,” said I in a whisper; and I quickly descended the stair-case, followed by Isabel. By the light of a smothered flambeaux,



I could perceive that the alcalde and the friar lay senseless, whether from fear or from wounds, I could not tell. The friar's habit had somehow slipped off his shoulders; and thinking it might be useful as a disguise, I picked it up, and stumbling also upon one of the boxes of relics, I hid it in my bosom: there was no obstacle to our escape—the doors all stood open; and in a few moments we found ourselves outside of the tower, while the retreating steps of the coffin-bearers were heard dying away in the distance. We lost not a moment's time, but immediately proceeded quickly along the mole, which we had all to ourselves; the terrified coffin-bearers had no doubt spread the alarm, for as we approached every post was in its turn abandoned; the alarmed sentinels throwing down their weapons, and flying before us; and I took care not to neglect the opportunity of arming myself against need, with a good sabre.

When we reached the end of the mole next to the town, we scrambled down upon the sea-beach; the moon, which was on the wane, had then risen, and just tipped the curling waves with a long line of silver, as they broke with a low plash upon the smooth sand: and as we walked onward, leaving Tarifa behind us, the following conversation took place.

“ Isabel,” said I, “ we are now fairly out of that cursed tower, and our endeavour must be to keep out of it.”

“ Well,” replied Isabel, “ we are taking the best means to do this,—for we are walking from it as fast as we can.”

“ True,” rejoined I; “ but it is so short a time since I was convicted at Tarifa, that if I am not, before day-break, at a great distance from it, it is more than likely that I may be recognised; as for you, you are in no sort of danger,—for the general belief must doubtless be, that the devil

carried you away,—and what the devil gets, he generally keeps. Now my advice is this,—as we cannot hope to escape in company, let us separate for the present;—you know you have a husband; and now that you are restored to the world, his rights must be respected. God forbid that I should interfere with them; though it will indeed be a sad thing to part from you—”

“ But,” interrupted Isabel, “ I understood that—”

“ Yes, yes, I know what you would say; but now that we are at liberty, the sanction of the church is required, and the church could not sanction our marriage, since you have a husband already: take my advice, and this purse of gold along with it (it was one of those received from the duped artists): seek Valenzuela—your husband, if he loves you, will readily forgive whatever has contributed to restore you to his arms: in a year, I will visit you there,—and if

in the meantime you should have the misfortune to be made a widow, I pledge myself to renew at the altar, the vows I pronounced in the tower of Tarifa."

Whether it was that Isabel, thankful to God for her deliverance, felt that a return to her husband was a religious duty; or, that the same causes which had abated the fervour of my love, had also influenced her's; or that looking around her, while the dull moonlight fell upon the solitary shore, she felt an insecurity in the protection of one who owed his present freedom to his impiety in counterfeiting a spirit, I cannot pretend to determine,—but certain it is, my proposal was not received with so much aversion as I expected.

"I will not diminish your chances of escape," said she, "by remaining with you;"—a motive of disinterestedness to which it was impossible I could give credit, though I nevertheless affected

to believe it; and after walking about two leagues farther, we sat down under a lofty rock, to wait the break of day, which was also to be the hour of separation. In little more than two hours, the stars began to turn pale,—the corner of the moon dipped into the sea,—and the opposite mountains of Barbary began to rise out of the gloom. I parted from Isabel, promising again and again to visit Valenzuela,—she, dropping one or two tears,—and both, murmuring many adieus. I saw her disappear above the cliff, and I was left alone.

## CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWING THAT SMALL OCCURRENCES ARE OFTENTIMES THE  
HINGE UPON WHICH GREAT EVENTS TURN,—AND ALSO  
PROVING, THAT COURAGE AND GOOD FORTUNE MAY AC-  
COMPLISH ANY THING.

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I HAD not as yet determined upon any plan for the future; but I felt little anxiety respecting it. I was again free, and my own master; and although my four thousand crowns were now in the pockets of the unfortunate merchant's heirs; and although I had given one purse to Isabel, I still possessed another, the gift of one of the rival painters, containing fifty pieces; I yet retained the jewels which Isabel had presented to me at Seville; as well as the diamond ring,

the gift of the Marquesa; and besides these, I had just made myself master of a box of relics, the value of which, in a proper market, might possibly be a fortune of itself. Recapture seemed the most unlikely thing in the world; for he who had been imprisoned as the murderer of the trader, was believed to have perished in the sea; and the ghost of Andrades was no subject for pursuit: and this reminded me, that having no farther occasion for my present disguise, the blood stains might as well be washed away, and so making shift with salt water, I stooped down, and restored my complexion to its natural hue; and putting on the habit of the Franciscan, continued my journey along the sea-beach.

I had not proceeded very far, before I perceived in the grey of the morning, two men in the act of shoving off from shore a little boat, which had been drawn up into a narrow creek into which I had just turned; and two other

men were visible at a little distance hurrying away from the beach, all of whom I at once concluded to be smugglers. I immediately hallooed to the boatmen; who, upon perceiving me, suspended their labours, and waited my approach. "Gentlemen," said I, making a polite obeisance, but taking care not to lift my hat from my head, that the want of a tonsure might not be discovered, and at the same time drawing my habit closely round me, "you see before you a poor friar of Velez Malaga, who has made the pilgrimage of the world, and who is now returning to his native place with a box of relics which he has had the good fortune to pick up, and which are designed for an offering to the church of the Holy Sepulchre."

At the mention of relics, and again at this pause, the smugglers crossed themselves devoutly; as it was natural to suppose they would.



“I have travelled all night,” continued I, “and am weary of my journey; and although God knows I have been more accustomed to receive than to give; yet I have one or two pieces to bestow upon honest men who will assist one of God’s servants to speed upon his way.”

I plainly perceived, that my safety among these men depended upon my disguise; and that my assumption of poverty, and a saintly character, could alone preserve me from outrage, by lulling cupidity, and exciting superstition.

“Why, as for that,” said the elder of the two men, “your reverence is welcome; your reverence, and the holy relics you speak of, will doubtless bring us safe to a port; we’re bound for Malaga, in that mystico you see yonder; and from Malaga you will have but four leagues to Velez Malaga;” and the next moment, we

were pulling off shore towards the mystico, which lay about half a league from land.

"This is the first time," said the younger of the men, as we pushed off, "we have ever had God's blessing upon our cargo."

"Peace," said the other, "or I'll make it all the lighter by the weight of your carcass."

We then continued to row in silence, until we neared the mystico; where, upon deck, another man stood waiting our approach; the harsh and ruffian-like cast of his countenance being strangely mingled with wonder, at seeing his companions accompanied by a friar. As we stepped on board, the elder of the rowers spoke a few words in a low key, and in the Andalusian dialect, to his wondering shipmate, who immediately crossed himself,—no doubt at mention of the relics.

The conversation among the smugglers continued in an under tone; but I could perceive

well enough, that I was frequently the subject of it. At length, the man who had been left in the mystico, turning to me, said, "Perhaps your reverence would indulge us seafaring men with a sight of these blessed relics, which my comrade tells me you have the good fortune to possess; 't is not every day that we have an opportunity of seeing such things."

This request was not difficult to grant: I was not then aware of the reason why it was made, but put it down to mere curiosity; and although I knew just as little as my companions did what the box contained, having only seen that it was marked "reliquias," I produced it without hesitation; aware, however, that I must show a perfect acquaintance with the history of the articles contained in it. Drawing the box accordingly from under my habit, while the three smugglers stood round me, I took off the lid, and drew forth a bit of stone—the first of the

relics I laid my hands upon. "This, gentlemen," said I, "is a chip off the stone that was rolled back from the mouth of the Holy Sepulchre."

"Jesus, Maria!" said all three, devoutly crossing themselves. "And this," said I, next laying my hand upon a small piece of rotten wood, "is a fragment of the rudder which belonged to the ship in which Jesus taught, on the sea of Tiberias."

"And this," drawing forth another piece of wood, "is part of the stake at which Saint— Saint Penaflor suffered martyrdom;" for having forgotten the names of the saints who had been thus honoured, and being afraid to fix upon any of the well-known saints, I canonized the name of my native village, which happened just then to come to my recollection.

"Saint Penaflor," said one of the listeners, "I never heard of that saint."

"He is not in my calendar," said another.

“Oh, but,” said I, “he is a most distinguished saint for all that, and well worthy of our devotion;” at the same time kissing the relic, and handing it to my companions, who also kissed it.

There was now but one relic remaining ; and whatever it was, it was neatly folded in several pieces of paper,—but when I opened the innermost of them, nothing was to be seen : this was a difficulty ; but determined not to fail in the latter end, I said, “In this paper, gentlemen, are two of the hairs of her, who, after anointing the feet of our Saviour with a costly ointment, wiped them dry with the hair of her head.”

Many were the signs of devotion that followed this announcement ; and the noses of the smugglers almost touched the paper, in their anxiety to see so precious a relic.

“Gentlemen,” said I, “it is possible you may be unable to see these hairs ; they are so fine

as to be descried only by the eye of faith ; for my own part, I am sometimes unable to distinguish them, so frail and wavering is faith,—but now, the sight of these holy relics has so warmed my devotion, that they seem to me almost as thick as ropes.”

“Que milagro ! !” said they all three, looking yet more closely ; “truly a precious relic.”

But while I had thus been sustaining my character as a friar, and increasing, as I imagined, the reverence of my companions for my sacred character, which I thought essential to the safety of both my person and my property, I had been unconsciously inflaming their cupidity. In their eyes, the sacredness of my person was lost in the greater sacredness of the relics ; and that, which by my own account it had cost me a pilgrimage round the world to collect, was naturally conjectured to be a prize worth the capture. But the conclusions come to upon

this subject by the two elder of the smugglers, and their consequent determination, will be best understood if given in their own words.

During all the day, the mystico had kept on its course through the straits of Gibraltar,—carried forward not by the wind, for it was almost a calm, but by the current that always sets into the Mediterranean. The smugglers had continued to talk to each other, sometimes in good Castilian,—and sometimes in low Andalusian; and it appeared that the youngest of the three understood but imperfectly the latter dialect. I could easily perceive that I was frequently the subject of their discourse; and that the youngest of the smugglers did not agree in opinion with his companions,—and as the night began to close in, I could not help feeling some suspicions of my safety, and considerable anxiety for our arrival at port. The mystico, although small, is a decked vessel; containing

a hold, used for stowing away smuggled goods, and a small cabin, in which are generally several beds. When it grew dark, I lay down upon deck, asking permission to draw an old sail over me, which was accorded, after having offered me a berth below,—but this being declined by me on the score of conscience, (having, as I said, made a vow never to sleep under cover), the smugglers did not press it; probably fearful of exciting my suspicions. I soon pretended to fall asleep,—and after a little while, the following conversation took place between the two elder smugglers, who carried it on in an undertone, and in low Andalusian, with the design, as I afterwards learned, of excluding their companion from any share in it.

“Well, Bernardo,” said one of the smugglers,—he who had carried me from shore,—  
“what is my share to be?”

“Why, Lopez,” replied his companion, “’t is time enough to settle that when the box is filled



with doubloons in place of relics; how can we divide four relics among three?"

"Easily," returned the first speaker; "my advice is, not to part with the piece of the rudder; 't will help us no doubt in many a rough sea,—and speedy voyages will make up to us more than twenty times its price in doubloons; and as it is owing to me, that the prize is secured, I have a good right to choose first; Santa Maria, 't was a lucky hit!"

"There's no denying," said Bernardo, "that you've the best right to choose,—which then is your choice?"

"You yield me the choice then," said Lopez.

"Why not," replied the other, "you've the best right to choose; and, for my part, I should not know which to set the highest value upon."

"'T is a bargain, then," said Lopez. "I choose the two hairs;"—and a half-smothered laugh announced the advantage he thought he had gained over his companion.

"Hush with your foolery," returned Bernardo, "you 'll awake the friar—what is there to laugh at; if your'e pleased with your choice, so am I."

"Handsomely duped are you," said Lopez; "do you think the bishop of Malaga will believe you, if you tell him that the chip of stone is a part of the stone that was rolled back from the Holy Sepulchre; or that piece of wood, a part of the stake at which the saint suffered martyrdom? though no doubt they both are; I don't doubt it,—holy Mary preserve me from such sin! but how, I say, do you suppose the bishop of Malaga will believe such as you?"

"By all the saints," said Bernardo angrily, "I'll teach you to make a distinction between your word and mine;" at the same time thrusting his hand into his girdle.

"It is my turn now to say hush," said Lopez. "I make no distinction between your word

and mine; but between your word and the bishop's eye-sight."

"How so," said Bernardo, "can the bishop see hairs better than wood and stone?"

"No," returned his companion; "but all the smugglers in Andalusia can see stone and wood as well as his lordship; whereas, the hairs are to be discerned only by the eye of faith; and, while to the bishop they will appear like ropes, his highness' servants will not be able to see them any more than you or I, and so my word need never be asked upon the subject; because the truth of what I shall tell the bishop will be at once proved by a miracle!—what think you now of my choice?"

"I think so well of it," said Bernardo, "that, with your leave, I'm off with the bargain."

"I might dispute that," said Lopez,—“but we had best not quarrel about the spoil till it be ours; Paulo will not assist us; nay, I am

not sure that he will not take part with the friar, who, if he be as active as he is strong limbed, is a match for one of us; and who can tell but an attempt to take—”

“I tell you,” interrupted Bernardo, “’tis a pious act to take the relics to Malaga; and as for the means,—why the bishop will be so glad to get them, that you may rest assured of absolution,—’tis not the first time you’ve stood so much in need of it. Let us say nothing more to Paulo; but agree to do it at the third watch: his is the first watch,—your’s the second,—mine the last; and when you call me, then will be the time, for we shall be together; and Paulo asleep below,—’tis but securing the box, and tossing him overboard.”

“And, I’ll warrant,” added Lopez, “that his purse is not so light as he pretends; he has not shown these relics round the world for nothing.”

"'T is time," said Bernardo, "to set the first watch; let's to our vespers."

And so the two smugglers, having sung a hymn to the Virgin,—in which Paulo joined, and said their evening prayers, retired to their cabin,—leaving Paulo to watch on deck.

It may well be believed, that during the foregoing conversation, my feelings were not the most enviable; escape from the vessel was impossible; and escape from the doom preparing for me, seemed nearly, if not altogether as hopeless. The two smugglers were in the prime of life; as iron limbed as they were iron hearted; both well armed, — and two to one besides. There was reason to believe, indeed, from what had passed between the smugglers, that Paulo was of a different character; and, although he could not understand much of the conversation, there could be no doubt that he was aware of the wicked intentions of his comrades; but then

the attempt was not to be made until Paulo should be asleep; and, besides, however well-disposed he might be, it was evident that his authority was less than that of his companions, and his personal strength was also greatly inferior to theirs.

Meanwhile, Paulo had taken his station upon deck, and paced slowly to and fro; sometimes pausing for a moment as he reached the spot where I lay. I still pretended to sleep; but after a considerable time had elapsed, I gave some slightly audible indications of being awake: the next time Paulo reached me, he made a full stop; I raised my head, and could perceive by the star-light,—for the moon had not then risen,—that he made some sign to me; and upon rising to my feet, he pointed first below,—and then imitated the action of throwing a burden into the sea. The sign would have been sufficiently significant even if I had not already been too

well informed of the intention of the smugglers; and now, having no reason to doubt the friendly disposition of Paulo, however small might be his power of serving me, I undid the girdle that bound my habit, and throwing it aside, showed him the sabre, which I partly unsheathed. He again pointed below,—touched his ear,—and made a sign for me to conceal the weapon,—and then continued his walk upon deck, while I seated myself at the stern, and began to consider in what manner I might resist the attempt that was to be made upon me, with the greatest probability of success.

“ This is but a poor exchange for the tower of Tarifa,” I said to myself mentally: “ a pretty conclusion truly to all my excellent contrivances, to be thrown overboard like a piece of lumber.” So small did my chances of escape seem to be, that I at one time entertained the idea of offering to give up the relics, bargaining to be put on

shore any where the smugglers might choose ; but this I again considered, might give rise to new suspicions ; and after being stript of what I possessed, might I not after all be dropped underneath. I then cast my eyes upon the little boat, which I saw through the gloom, dancing behind the mystico ; but if my escape in it were discovered, this would be certain destruction, because the mystico could be worked by oars as well as by sail, and if overtaken I could expect no mercy ; but upon looking more closely at the boat, I missed the oars, and immediately recollected that these had been taken into the vessel. This idea was therefore necessarily abandoned. " After all," said I to myself, "'t is but two to one ; and the darkness is in my favour, since I am prepared for the attempt."

It may be supposed that, occupied with these thoughts, I did not dispose myself for sleep ; but wearied with thinking, and with the exertions of



the preceding night, I at length fell into a slumber. How long it continued, I cannot tell; but I was awoke by some one gently pushing me: it was Paulo, who was about to resign the watch to Lopez; and who thus kindly roused me from a sleep that must have been fatal. He descended to the cabin, and his place was immediately taken by Lopez; who, when he first came upon deck, stood for a while motionless, evidently listening, that he might ascertain whether I slept; which I need scarcely say, I feigned to do. Meanwhile, the wind began to rise,—the moon which had been sometime risen, was almost obscured by the clouds that sped swiftly across the sky,—the broad-backed waves began to put on their cowls, and the little vessel went swiftly through the water. Lopez, after reefing the sails and making fast the helm, drew his cloak closer round him,—pulled his cap over his ears, and leaned over the vessel's side upon his crossed arms.

While Lopez stood thus, a sudden thought darted into my mind; “why wait the expiration of this watch!—why wait the assault of two men, when here is only one to contend with!—why not be the assailant?” Lopez stood not many paces distant from me,—still leaning over the vessel; he evidently believed that I was asleep; one spring would place me by his side; but still it would be man to man,—and the smallest struggle would bring Bernardo to his assistance. Why even risk the event of a struggle? a deadly struggle for life upon equal terms, with a man who was leagued with a confederate to throw me overboard! his back was turned towards me; the noise of the wind and waves would effectually prevent any trifling sound from being heard; in another moment he might change his position, and my opportunity would be lost for ever! I hesitated no longer: trusting to the welcome gust that had just risen,—

to my caution,—to my quickness, and to my physical strength to peril the event on a struggle, if necessary, I crept from my place,—slid noiselessly along the deck,—and at the moment that a rack of clouds drove against the moon, and a huge wave swept with a deafening rush along the side of the vessel, I rose silently behind Lopez; and at the same instant, seizing him round the lower part of the body, pitched him headlong into the sea:—there was no struggle, the act was momentary; one hoarse imprecation, as I flung him from me; and a cry of “Bernardo” faintly heard through the roar of wind and wave, were all: the vessel bounded forward from the summit of a huge billow; and if any other cries were uttered by Lopez, they reached no human ear. One enemy was thus disposed of: I stepped softly to the head of the ladder, and listened attentively, but all was still below; the appeal, or imprecation of Lopez had not reached the ear of

Bernardo. I was now upon equal terms with my enemy, and had therefore little to fear.

It was now a question with me, whether I should wait the attack of Bernardo, or be myself the assailant: it was doubtful whether I might be able to reach him asleep; he might awake at the sound of a footstep, and could doubtless distinguish between the step of Lopez, and that of a stranger; and I was unwilling to peril my life upon a struggle below, and in darkness. I resolved therefore to wait Bernardo's appearance upon deck; and closing with him, to call upon Paulo for assistance. More than an hour passed without any sound being heard from below. At length my ear caught the sound of a slight movement; and the next moment, "Lopez" was twice pronounced in an under tone by Bernardo; it was repeated a third time,—and hearing no answer, Bernardo muttering something to himself, began to ascend. I had placed myself in such a posi-

tion, that Bernardo's back would be presented to me when he ascended from below. No sooner had he reached the deck, than I threw myself upon him, pinioning his arms, and at the same time called loudly upon Paulo; but I had either overrated my own strength, or underrated that of my adversary: with a sudden and powerful jerk, he freed himself from my grasp, calling loudly upon Lopez, and venting horrible imprecations; and at the same instant drawing a pistol from his girdle, he sent a ball into Paulo's side, who had just appeared above deck; and who, uttering a groan, fell back into the cabin.

It was now man to man;—in another moment a ball would have been through my heart; there was no time to draw my sabre; and springing forward, I closed upon my enemy. It was a death wrestle: man to man, on the deck of the little vessel on the wide ocean; close folded in each other's gripe, we struggled for life; not a

word was spoken—we tugged in silence and darkness—gradually we neared the side of the vessel; and now it was the object of each, to lift his adversary from the deck, and precipitate him into the sea,—we reeled to and fro,—and I felt strength beginning to fail me; at length, by a terrific effort, Bernardo lifted me from my footing, but being unable to unloose my gripe, which would have dragged him after me, he flung himself forward upon the deck, while I fell beneath him; but scarcely had I touched the planks, when Bernardo uttered a deep groan—his grasp relaxed, and he rolled over me upon the deck; the knife which he carried in his girdle\* had turned in the struggle, and falling upon the haft, the point had entered his heart!

“Now God be praised,” said I, as I felt the deck slippery with my enemy’s blood, and could

\* All over the southern provinces of Spain, a knife is carried in the girdle.

see beneath the feeble moonlight, that had now for a moment found its way through the clouds, the ruffian face of Bernardo distorted with the death struggle; "now God be praised, and our Lady, for the events of this night!" for I confess that while struggling with Bernardo, the recollection of the saint I had stolen in my youth, flashed upon my mind; nor did I feel altogether at ease as to the false history of the relics, which necessity had forced me to give; but I now plainly perceived, that my errors had been forgiven, or overlooked; and from that moment, neither of these circumstances ever gave me the smallest uneasiness.

END OF VOL. I.





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